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Chair: Mr. Denis Zdorov (Vice-Chair) .... (Belarus)

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Zdorov (Belarus), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Agenda item 17: Macroeconomic policy questions (*continued*)

(a) International trade and development (A/66/15 (Parts I-IV), A/66/138, A/66/185 and A/66/323)

(d) Commodities (A/66/207)

1. **Mr. Panitchpadki** (Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international trade and development (A/66/185), said that while the world economy teetered on the brink of a second recession it was important to bear in mind the potential that trade could have in supporting a recovery. At the same time, the global financial crisis served as a reminder that it was no longer possible to discuss the different parts of the international economic system in isolation.

2. Over the past five decades trade had grown consistently faster than gross domestic product (GDP) in almost all countries and regions. That increase had been particularly rapid for developing countries over the past decade. The shifting direction of trade, particularly along its South-South axis, had been closely linked to the increased role of production networks. Trade in intermediate goods had been dynamic and had expanded to represent nearly 50 per cent of non-fuel merchandise trade, which had encouraged the specialization of economies in different processing activities. Participation in production networks had created new trading opportunities for a number of developing countries, particularly in the Asian emerging economies where the high import content of exports had benefited other developing countries both inside and outside the region. The benefits of trade expansion had not been distributed evenly across and within countries, however; close to one third of all developing countries had experienced a contraction in exports, which demonstrated that income convergence was not an automatic consequence of a more open global economy and polarization remained a challenge.

3. The global recovery of 2010 had been boosted by a rebound in world trade. Overall world merchandise exports had recorded their largest ever annual expansion in 2010; the surge in exports was attributable to vibrant demand in developing countries and economies in transition. By the second quarter of 2011, the value of world exports had already exceeded the pre-crisis level. Since then, however, the global recovery had stalled and UNCTAD forecasted that the pace of world output growth would decelerate in 2011. Trade growth was also expected to fall. The debt crisis in Europe and the widespread adoption of restrictive fiscal policies had combined with persistently high unemployment rates to push the world to the brink of another recession. Failure to address those challenges would put further pressure on the trading system and threaten a serious backlash against globalization.

4. Harnessing the beneficial effects of global integration for sustained and inclusive growth would require deliberate policy efforts in order to minimize risks and share dividends more equitably. That required a policy agenda, at both the national and the international levels, focused on inclusive development. The thirteenth session of UNCTAD would provide an opportunity to mobilize international efforts to realize a paradigm of development-centred, as opposed to a finance-led, globalization.

5. While international trade had always been central to strong growth in most countries, the relationship between trade and development had shifted in the context of finance-driven globalization, particularly with respect to the investment-export nexus. Financial markets exerted considerable stress on developing economies, for example where excessive short-term capital inflows created unwarranted appreciation of currencies which could dampen trade prospects, and the problem was often amplified by policy incoherence across the multilateral economic system; greater consistency was an urgent priority.

6. Policy responses should be tailored to each country's specific circumstances; the imperative of global balancing underscored the need for surplus countries to strive towards more balanced growth on the basis of both domestic and external demand and for deficit countries to focus more on savings and exports. Governments should play a greater role and take an integrated approach to trade and development policies; proactive and comprehensive policies and regulations were needed which might go beyond what was traditionally regarded as trade policy. Effective institutions and strong employment practices were likewise important to ensuring that domestic

economies derived the fullest advantage from international trade.

7. Because many developing countries remained dependent on the rural economy, attention needed to be redirected towards that sector, and the links between trade and food security should be emphasized. While agriculture accounted for more than 50 per cent of employment in many developing countries, it contributed less than 10 per cent to their exports. The growing trade deficits in food products experienced by many of the least developed countries called for renewed efforts to control commodity price volatility and to reduce the agricultural subsidies that distorted trade flows. That would require large investment programmes, with sufficient international funding, tailored to local needs and conditions.

8. The setbacks experienced in the Doha Round negotiations were a clear manifestation of the difficulties faced by Governments when forced to balance the need for cooperation in a multilateral global trading system with domestic political considerations, they posed the risk of eroding the relevance of the multilateral agenda. Nevertheless, the financial crisis had demonstrated the robustness of the multilateral system as an effective bulwark against protectionism. At the same time, however, new tensions were arising in novel areas of the trading system and there was a growing emphasis on regional trade agreements intended to create platforms for regional supply chains by ensuring a duty-free trading environment and deep regulatory integration; such agreements could lead to fragmentation of the international trading system, sidelining smaller and more vulnerable developing countries.

9. Within the global trading system, specific measures to support South-South cooperation and to promote exports from the least developed countries had been strengthened. The conclusion in 2010 of the São Paulo Round of the General System of Trade Preferences (GSTP) negotiations was emblematic of the growing viability of South-South integration and cooperation. Significant potential existed also for South-South regional integration. In Africa, for example, continent-wide developmental integration could generate welfare gains of $6.5 billion if trade liberalization were combined with regulatory and developmental integration in support of intra-regional trade. The "special harvest" package for the least developed countries would be particularly important in helping them to implement the Istanbul Plan of Action.

10. It should be noted that the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) used different methodologies from the World Trade Organization (WTO) to measure the product-specific aggregate measurement of support (AMS); ICAC figures therefore tended to be higher than the AMS figures reported to WTO, for example in the case of China, where, in addition, cotton production was fully consumed locally. UNCTAD viewed the scaling up of South-South cooperation as an important means of strengthening the export positioning of African cotton producers.

11. Trade was one part of an interdependent and cumulative development process; as countries began to reorient their growth strategies in response to new economic realities, the international trading system should support the establishment of the conditions necessary to achieve development-centred globalization, whereby States could take a multiplicity of approaches to inclusive growth and development. Greater attention needed to be paid to the broader implications of trade and trade liberalization to society as a whole; that would imply a developmental approach of cooperation based on collective interest and solidarity, to ensure the equitable sharing of gains and losses. It was also important to align existing rules and practices with longer-term development objectives, and to transform the approach to implementing and monitoring trade agreements and addressing trade issues from a litigation-based framework to a more cooperative arrangement. Some countries needed support to strengthen their capacity to engage in the multilateral trading system. The United Nations system could play a major role in that regard; it should scale up its role in the provision of Aid-for-Trade and help countries explore new approaches to international trade rule-making.

12. **Mr. Maruping** (President, Trade and Development Board, UNCTAD), introducing the report (TD/B/58/9) of the fifty-eighth session of the Trade and Development Board, held in Geneva in September 2011, said that the regular session of the Board had begun with a high-level segment on the topic of volatile capital flows and development. Capital flow volatility had become one of the most pressing challenges for policymakers in developing and emerging countries. Short-term volatile capital inflows

that could be withdrawn abruptly and for reasons unrelated to the economic situation in the host country could adversely affect the nature and pace of development. The resulting currency misalignments and distortions of exchange rates were frustrating countries' efforts to develop their manufacturing industries, lengthen their value chains and diversify their production for both domestic consumption and export.

13. On the topic "Interdependence: Addressing trade and development challenges and opportunities after the global financial and economic crisis" there had been consensus that the adoption of effective policies to attain stable, sustained and inclusive growth was one of the main development challenges and that crucial components in articulating policy responses at the global, national and regional levels should include global imbalances and the implications of unchecked commodity price volatility. Excessive volatility made it difficult for Governments, especially in less developed economies, to plan their revenues and expenditures effectively and to provide social safety nets. More generally there had been concern that the current wave of globalization had been characterized by an overdependence on the financial sector. It was imperative that the issue of how best to control its worst excesses should be addressed.

14. On the topic "Development strategies in a globalized world", the Board had tackled the issue of the new role of government and fiscal policy. The global economy was at a critical juncture and was in danger of relapsing. In contrast to the situation in 2008, when virtually all policymakers had agreed that fiscal stimulus needed to be maintained until recovery was assured, there was a growing perspective that fiscal consolidation had to be the new policy priority. Recent experience in the European Union, and especially in the euro zone periphery, suggested that the salutary effects of fiscal retrenchment had commonly been overestimated, and that fiscal policy should be directed towards leading economies out of crisis.

15. On the topic "Evolution of the international trading system and of international trade from a development perspective", delegations had reaffirmed the power of trade to spur growth and development. They had noted that the global economy had entered a growth crisis in 2011 and that many countries, particularly the least developed countries, had remained marginalized, but had reaffirmed that the multilateral trading system was an effective bulwark against protectionism. There had been unanimous support for reenergizing multilateralism and many delegations had stressed the need for greater inclusiveness, equity and fairness. Addressing the central role of agriculture in inclusive development, participants had recognized the role of the international trading system in creating an enabling environment since agriculture remained among the most distorted economic sectors as a result of tariff and non-tariff barriers and export subsidies.

16. The "Economic development in Africa" segment of the session had focused on the Economic Development in Africa report 2011, whose key message was that Africa needed a new industrial policy to induce structural transformation, create employment and reduce poverty. Under such a policy, Governments should provide support to entrepreneurs, and also hold them accountable for non-performance, and there must be more consultation between Governments and the private sector in the design of industrial policies. Delegations had also stressed the need for the international community to create a better global environment for African countries to promote industrial development, and more stable and predictable sources of finance for industrialization in the region.

17. Under the item "Investment for development", the Board had noted that while firms had largely kept control over their value chains in the past through equity ownership, the situation had been radically transformed with production processes and value chains becoming fragmented and scattered worldwide, and ownership and control being reconfigured.

18. Regarding the least developed countries, there had been agreement that the targets contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action conveyed a sense of urgency and a desire on the part of the least developed countries to break away from aid dependency and the poverty trap. It was stressed that the commitments of the Programme of Action must be mainstreamed into development strategies at both the national and international levels.

19. During the Board's deliberations on assistance to the Palestinian people, there had been near unanimous commendation for the Secretariat's support for the Palestinian people and their State-building efforts. It had been stressed that adequate resources were

required to intensify UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people and there had been widespread concern over the dire situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and calls for action to address the challenges.

20. Preparations for the thirteenth session of UNCTAD were proceeding apace with agreements having been reached on themes and sub-themes for the Conference and the tabling of a number of substantive position papers by regional groups. The Conference and its preparatory process came at a difficult time for global authorities, which continued to struggle with the effects of the economic and financial crisis. The Conference would offer the world an opportunity to engage in a serious dialogue and to make significant contributions to development, despite the forbidding circumstances.

21. **Ms. Cortez** (Chief, Committee for Development Policy Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries (A/66/138), said that the report had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 64/189. The Secretariat had invited the Governments of all Member States and relevant organizations, programmes and agencies both inside and outside the United Nations system to provide any pertinent information, as well as their views on the matter.

22. Member States had expressed their disagreement with the imposition of unilateral economic measures as an instrument of political and economic coercion, which in their view conflicted with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the rules-based multilateral trading system. They had also expressed concern about the negative impact of unilateral economic measures on the socio-economic development of the affected countries, in which vulnerable groups, particularly children and the poor, were the most affected.

23. **Mr. Panitchpakdi** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD), introducing the report on world commodity trends and prospects (A/66/207), said that global commodity prices had experienced unprecedented volatility in recent years, and had reached a new peak in the first half of 2011, before starting to decline again due to increasing worries about the prospects for the world economy. While such price variations impacted all countries, developing countries tended to be affected most because commodities made up a much larger share both of their trade accounts and of their average consumption baskets, food and energy prices had a larger impact on the purchasing power of poor households, and such countries had a growing dependence on exports of a few commodities. While the recent commodity price movements had coincided with shifts in supply and demand relationships, they had also been influenced by the increasing participation of financial investors in commodity trading. Speculation in commodities had been driven by increased liquidity in financial markets which could not be absorbed by economies, resulting in unregulated capital flows that had put additional pressure on commodity markets and had led to rising food prices.

24. The UNCTAD food price index had decreased during the first half of 2010 before rising and peaking in February 2011. Prices for cereals, vegetable oils and meat had increased the most, while sugar prices had experienced dramatic peaks and troughs. The tropical beverages price index had risen steadily since December 2010. The price index for minerals, ores and metals had also jumped significantly, having been driven by continuous strong demand from Asian economies. Over the next few years, supply was likely to continue falling short of demand, so that metals prices could rise further. Gold prices had increased sharply as investors took refuge following renewed economic turmoil in the United States and Europe.

25. The financialization of the commodity markets had played a prominent role in amplifying the boom-and-bust cycles of commodity prices. It was likely that financial sector participation in commodity markets caused herding in commodity markets and irrational speculative behaviour; such behaviour could lead to asset price bubbles when positions were taken based on the actions of other market actors. The financialization of commodity markets had priced many commodities out of reach of some of the poorest populations, and had contributed to higher levels of poverty, malnutrition and social unrest.

26. The key challenge for policymakers should be to identify innovative and coherent policies at the national, regional and international levels to ensure that price volatility did not impede growth, development and poverty eradication efforts. Four policy responses to improve derivatives market functioning should be considered: the promotion of

greater transparency in markets so as to enable the provision of more timely and accurate information about commodities; better access to information, especially regarding position-taking by different categories of market participants; tighter regulation of financial market participants, for example through the establishment of position limits, in order to contain the impact of financial investors on commodity markets; and, as a last resort, direct intervention by surveillance authorities in exchange trading by buying or selling derivatives contracts with a view to deflating price bubbles.

27. Addressing the issue of the financialization of commodity markets and the attendant boom-and-bust cycles would play a crucial role not only in harnessing the benefits of commodities trade for development and poverty reduction, but also in putting the world economy on a more stable growth path by reducing the impact of disruptive speculative flows.

28. **Mr. Iziraren** (Morocco) asked what the role of UNCTAD should be in the restructuring of global economic governance.

29. **Mr. Panitchpakdi** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD) said that various reports of UNCTAD had pointed out the need for global coherence. Despite some global economic recovery, the need to coordinate global policy remained. It was worrying that despite the successful stimulus policies of 2008 and 2009, the Group of 20 (G-20) had not been able to coordinate their exit strategies. Some members persisted with short-term stimulus spending while others had moved towards fiscal retrenchment, sometimes too early to bring stability and reduce borrowing needs. By spending more and borrowing less, States could create employment and bring in tax revenue, which in turn would alleviate the national debt.

30. UNCTAD had raised concerns regarding the sustainability of debt. Private debt was increasingly being socialized, but Governments faced difficulties in repaying it. The need to resolve debts should be addressed systematically, especially in the case of European countries. In some instances, States might need to follow the "Chapter 11" model of the private sector.

31. Individual States had made commendable efforts to tighten regulation; the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act adopted by the United States of America was one example. However, multilateral coordination was essential in order to ensure that financial institutions did not seek out the least regulated economies. While initial proposals in that direction might be best formulated by the G-20, the United Nations system could contribute by ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders.

32. Trade expansion was necessary for the global economy to fully emerge from the crisis. It was therefore essential to promote negotiations at WTO and counter any protectionist trends. Even without a conclusion to the Doha Round, confidence-building actions could be taken.

33. **Mr. Almeida** (Brazil) said that it would be useful to promote coordination between the Committee and UNCTAD. He asked whether the Secretary-General of UNCTAD could elaborate on his hopes and expectations for the thirteenth session of UNCTAD.

34. **Mr. Panitchpakdi** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD) said that he hoped that the thirteenth session would stress development-led globalization as opposed to finance-led globalization. The latter had caused recurrent crises, shadow financing and over-indebtedness. Banks should perform traditional banking roles instead of merely pursuing profit. The session would provide an opportunity to explore such questions and to move towards a more inclusive model of globalization.

35. Growth in productive capacity was a means towards inclusive development rather than an end in itself. Middle-income countries would need technological progress in order to overcome stagnation and achieve sustained growth. Such growth should in turn have a social dimension, leveraging fiscal reform to mobilize revenue for social protection. The Bolsa Família programme in Brazil was a case in point. Discussions should also address the ability of States to maintain balanced growth and sustainability in development, giving guidelines for legal and institutional reform. Lastly, global markets should have global rules, not only for trade but also for finance. He expected that there would be major side-events on gender and development and on the least developed countries.

36. **Mr. Igali** (Nigeria) said that the architecture of global macroeconomic trade and development did indeed affect the ability of developing States to participate in international trade. It was therefore important to find new ways to encourage

non-speculative investment in developing countries, thereby fostering employment and the ability to trade. In the case of West Africa, for example, low productive capacity hampered the region's ability to trade.

37. **Mr. Bairagi** (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), said that while international trade played a crucial role for promoting sustainable economic development in the LDCs, those countries still had a collective share of just over 1 per cent of world merchandise trade, and that was highly concentrated on a few export products. The Istanbul Programme of Action aimed to double that share by 2020, a goal that would require strong international support encompassing such aspects as market access and capacity-building. Duty-free and quota-free access for all products originating in LDCs would be necessary, as would simplified rules of origin and the removal of all distorting measures, including subsidies. In view of the deep-rooted structural constraints that limited the supply-side capacity of LDCs, an enhanced trading capacity was essential. Private sector involvement, diversification and improved product quality would all help to expand trade. As agreed in the Istanbul Programme of Action, the focus should be on enhancing the capacities of LDCs in trade policy and trade negotiations, increasing their productivity, competitiveness and diversification, and enabling them to fulfil the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

38. Development partners should further enhance the share of assistance to LDCs for Aid-for-Trade and their support for the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries; provide incentives to enterprises and institutions in their territories for the purpose of promoting and encouraging technology transfer to LDCs in order to enable them to create a sound and viable technological base, in accordance with the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights; and support them in fostering subregional and regional cooperation.

39. The Group was deeply concerned about the delay in concluding the Doha Round of trade negotiations; a further delay would have severe implications for the development efforts of LDCs. The Group welcomed the targeting of LDC issues such as duty-free and quota-free market access, rules of origin, a most favoured nation waiver to cover preferential services market access, and cotton, at the eighth ministerial conference of WTO, to be held in December 2011, which would be a solid contribution to promote the development dimensions of the Doha Round.

40. Although there had been significant progress in expanding duty-free and quota-free market access for the LDCs since 2000, product coverage needed to be expanded in order to meet the targets of the 2005 Hong Kong ministerial decision. Supply side capacity, adjustment and competitiveness challenges should also be addressed through innovative support measures.

41. The Group took note of the European Union's Generalized System of Preferences rules of origin and hoped that the new and more flexible rules for LDC industrial products covered by the single-transformation rule would improve market access. Developed countries should establish harmonized rules of origin based on common value-added criteria with flexible regional cumulation. A services waiver providing preferential market access to LDCs, especially under Mode 4, would help boost and diversify LDC exports and reduce trade deficits; it should not, however, replace most favoured nation status.

42. Twelve LDCs were currently applying for membership of WTO. That process should be streamlined, and the accession guidelines determined in 2002 should be effectively implemented. The delivery of an early harvest of measures in favour of LDCs would set the scene for the 2012 trade negotiations and help to boost the share of LDCs in world exports. In order to achieve Millennium Development Goal 8, an open, inclusive, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system must be established; that system must be responsive to the particular development challenges of the LDCs.

43. Many LDCs still depended on commodities and a significant number relied primarily on agriculture or the extraction of a few natural resources or primary products; they were therefore extremely vulnerable to price volatility. Concerted action should be taken in order to support efforts to mitigate the effects of excessive volatility. Development partners should help LDCs to deal with the associated risks, manage natural resources, diversify their commodity base and strengthen effective marketing systems. The G-20

Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture was a welcome step in that direction.

44. **Mr. Stokes** (Australia), speaking on behalf of the Cairns Group, said that the 36th ministerial meeting of the Group had been held from 7 to 9 September 2011 in Saskatoon, Canada. Ministers had discussed the international trade policy environment, including the Doha Round; their shared desire to continue agricultural trade policy reform; and the development dimension of agriculture and food security. The ministers had expressed their strong disappointment the Doha Round negotiations, including on agriculture, were not likely to be concluded by the end of 2011. They had called for a frank discussion to move towards the necessary reform and secure a fair, market-oriented and predictable trading environment; and stressed that agriculture remained central to the negotiations, given its importance for the development needs of developing countries.

45. As a unique coalition of both developed and developing countries, the Group remained determined to secure genuine agricultural trade reform. They had expressed full support for the central role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the global governance of food security and stressed the need to find new, innovative and sustainable means to increase production capacities and improve access to food by reducing poverty and enhancing income distribution. They had recognized that trade policy reform had a role to play in addressing food security and that policies that distorted production and trade in agricultural products could impede the achievement of long-term food security, an objective that would be furthered by the work of the Group and the international standard-setting bodies.

46. The Cairns Group considered that trade policy reform had a role to play in promoting food security and had vigorously pursued reforms such as the elimination of export subsidies and reductions in agricultural support and in tariffs. Open, fair and functioning domestic and international markets encouraged investment and created new opportunities for growth in production. Trade should continue to play a role as an engine for economic growth; trade reform could not be postponed for better times.

47. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the report of the Secretary-General on international trade and development (A/66/185) highlighted the developing countries' increasing share of world trade and the growing tendency towards regional specialization, which kept developing countries in labour-intensive, low-value-added production activities. It therefore underscored the need to conclude a round of multilateral trade negotiations with a strong development dimension.

48. The CARICOM countries continued to proceed in good faith towards progressive trade liberalization in the belief that an open, inclusive and transparent rules-based multilateral trading system with a strong development component could enhance the region's efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. However, they opposed an approach to liberalization that did not truly serve the development needs of developing countries by allowing them to benefit from participation in the multilateral trading system. Despite the persistent difficulties they faced in penetrating global markets, the CARICOM countries acknowledged the value of the Aid-for-Trade initiative, since developing countries needed more than market access in order to benefit from the multilateral trading system.

49. Throughout the Doha Round of negotiations, the CARICOM countries had sought to ensure due consideration for the special circumstances of small vulnerable economies, whose widening trade deficits and heavy debt burdens had been compounded by the increases and volatility of the prices of commodities such as oil and food and the erosion of preferences. The situation was aggravated by the ongoing global economic crisis, which had resulted in significant job losses and made it necessary for several CARICOM Governments to enter into stand-by agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The precarious economic situation had the potential to erode the development gains made over the years. It was therefore imperative that any international, regional or bilateral trade agreement into which CARICOM members entered should include a development dimension and provide enough policy space to allow for the introduction of effective and appropriate development programmes.

50. The CARICOM countries had long maintained that the development dimension of the Doha Round should include increased market access for the region's key export products and a recognition of the

asymmetries between developing and developed countries and should fully take into account the understandings already reached. They supported the calls for a review of the development-related initiatives undertaken by WTO. While there had been some limited progress in the Doha Round, much more could be achieved with the requisite political will; its future would depend on the outcome of the eighth ministerial conference of WTO. The thirteenth session of UNCTAD would provide an opportunity to take stock of the situation and mobilize political will.

51. **Ms. Medvedeva** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation believed that trade was one of the most important instruments available to generate the resources necessary for development. The notable increase in trade between countries of the South, the significant growth in trade volume in countries with developing market economies, including Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), and the expansion of regional ties were all contributing to the revitalization of the global economy. In October 2001, the Russian Federation and seven countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, namely Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine, had signed an agreement on the establishment of a free-trade zone, thereby expanding the opportunities for preferential trade between the participating countries.

52. Her Government noted with concern the uncertainty surrounding the possibility of concluding the Doha Round by the end of 2011. It hoped that countries would demonstrate a readiness to compromise during the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2011, thereby proving the effectiveness of WTO in balancing the competing interests of different countries and groups and adapting to changing economic circumstances. It would be difficult to overstate the advantages of the multilateral trading system, which enshrined universal rules for all participants in international trade, established conditions to avoid protectionism and provided Governments with a platform to resolve trade disputes. The Russian Federation was committed to the principles and spirit of WTO and was seeking to become a full-fledged member, a process which was nearing its conclusion.

53. The Russian Federation attached great importance to the application in international economic relations of the system of preferences reflecting the legitimate national interests of individual countries. It had therefore approved the list of countries using a national system of preferences and also the list of preferential commodities, which primarily applied to the least developed countries.

54. High and unsustainable prices for commodities and the actions of speculative investors in agricultural and non-agricultural commodity markets were having a negative impact on food security and the global economy. Collective measures needed to be taken to find possible solutions. Her delegation welcomed the concrete steps taken by the G-20, in particular at the Seoul summit meeting in 2010, to improve the operation of oil markets, reduce the volatility of prices in coal and gas markets, and review the macroeconomic effects of changes in commodity prices.

55. As a participant in a range of multilateral trade agreements, the Russian Federation advocated the creation of predictable and stable commodity markets and the balancing of the interests of producers and consumers and supported the development of the commodity export potential of developing and least developed countries. As one of the key players on the world grain market, the Russian Federation had taken the initiative to organize an international grain forum and a session of the International Grains Council in Moscow from 7-8 December 2011. At those meetings, there would be discussions of the current situation and future prospects of the world grain market, global food security, and macroeconomic aspects.

56. Her delegation commended the role of UNCTAD as the main coordinating centre for development issues. Its analytical potential in the realm of trade and investment policy should be harnessed in the interests of assisting developing and least developed countries in their integration into the global trading system. The thirteenth session of UNCTAD would provide an opportunity to mobilize international efforts to ensure the inclusive and stable growth of international trade and the development of the global economy.

57. **Mr. Almeida** (Brazil) said that trade could make a significant contribution towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The ongoing world economic and financial crisis continued to have a profound effect on trade in all regions; it was

highly unlikely that the strong performance of the global economy in 2010 would be repeated in 2011. The recovery remained uneven, fragile and uncertain, and the prospects for 2012 were not encouraging. Much would depend on the duration of the slowdown in the developed economies. The United Nations, IMF, the World Bank, WTO and the G-20 must promote strengthened policy coordination and coherence. The thirteenth session of UNCTAD would provide an important opportunity to address many of the issues at hand.

58. Brazil remained committed to a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. At a time of renewed crisis, it was essential for Member States to refrain from reverting to protectionism. Exchange rate manipulation caused by excessively expansionist monetary policies or by artificially-fixed exchange rates should be strongly discouraged. Exchange rate shifts affected international trade both directly and indirectly. Currency crises had required painful adjustments in output and consumption, often to the detriment of the poor and vulnerable, in particular in the least developed countries. Discussions on the topic should include all public and private stakeholders, notably academia, international organizations and Member States.

59. Brazil remained fully committed to a balanced, ambitious and development-oriented outcome of the Doha Round. The elimination of agricultural export subsidies, a substantial reduction in domestic measures of support by developed countries and enhanced market access would be the most significant contribution that developed countries could make to promote development. At the eighth ministerial conference, the focus should be on measures that would help strengthen WTO as an effective vehicle for multilateral trade negotiations; to that end, it was crucial to make an honest assessment of the Doha Round and set realistic goals for the future. While it might not be possible to conclude all elements of the Doha Development Agenda in the short term, it was important to send a clear signal that discussions were progressing.

60. Brazil was concerned about the increasing volatility of food and energy prices. While the increases were partly a result of long-term structural trends, there was also evidence that excessive speculation could exacerbate the problem. Financial instruments had an important role to play in providing information on prices, quantities and expectations. It was crucial to increase transparency and ensure proper regulation of commodity markets.

61. **Ms. Valiente Díaz** (Cuba) said that the lack of progress in the Doha Round, particularly in topics that were crucial for the countries of the South, was deeply discouraging. At countless events, developed countries had expressed their desire for prompt conclusion of the Doha Round; notwithstanding such rhetoric, those countries' inflexibility was the real obstacle to progress. The development objectives of the Doha Round could not be sacrificed. A successful conclusion meant balanced and equitable agreement on access to markets for agricultural and industrial goods, while allowing less than full reciprocity so that developing countries could implement domestic policies; attention must be paid to the special needs of disadvantaged nations, particularly small and vulnerable economies. Multilateral trade negotiations must be transparent and inclusive, despite the repeated attempts of a certain group of countries to impose their decisions on the other Member States within WTO.

62. The commitments made by the developed countries to combat protectionism had not been fulfilled; instead, in the context of the global economic and financial crisis, new trade barriers and protectionist measures had been introduced. The establishment of an open, just, equitable, non-discriminatory and transparent multilateral trading system had still not taken place. That goal could not be fully realized in the current neo-liberal global economic order, in which world trade continued to be a tool to serve the interests of the more powerful States.

63. Cuba believed that the adoption of the special safeguard mechanism, an agreement on special products, effective access for sensitive goods such as cotton, attention to the issue of erosion of preferences, and sufficient flexibility to give food-importing countries access to the necessary funding were necessary in order to respond effectively to the crisis in the short term. Forthcoming agreements reached in multilateral trade negotiations should include a commitment to identify the non-tariff barriers and their consequences for developing countries, especially small and vulnerable economies. In that regard, it was essential to eliminate such unilateral trade measures as the absurd embargo enforced against Cuba by the United States of America, which violated the United

Nations Charter, international law and the spirit and letter of the Agreements of WTO.

64. **Mr. Sergeev** (Belarus) said that Belarus endorsed the need to maximize the opportunities afforded by international trade in order to achieve concrete development outcomes, and stressed that the realization of that goal was intimately associated with the establishment on the basis of the principles of partnership and equality of a predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system. The effectiveness of that system would depend on the success of efforts by the United Nations and its Member States, as well as of international organizations and institutions, to ensure its smooth functioning at every level. To that end, every effort must be made to bring about a successful conclusion of the Doha Round and to accelerate the negotiating process for the admission to WTO of a number of United Nations Member States. In addition, in view of the ongoing energy and food security crises, special attention must be paid to establishing conditions within the international trading system to facilitate the transfer of cutting-edge energy and agricultural technologies. His Government was prepared to participate constructively in those processes.

65. Concrete action must be taken to bolster the global economy against international financial and economic crises. In that regard the granting of trade preferences by developed countries to developing countries within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and on an autonomous basis would be an effective instrument in promoting economic recovery and development. At the same time, tariffs and other trade barriers for the least developed countries must be further reduced in order to facilitate the dynamic development of trade which, in turn, would enable Governments of least developed countries to accelerate the adoption of measures aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

66. In the context of the global financial and economic crisis, the application of protectionist measures was unacceptable, particularly when they were directed against States which lacked sufficient resources and were highly vulnerable to external economic shocks as a result of their high degree of integration into the global economy. The United Nations should take steps to provide the necessary assistance to poor and middle-income countries, taking into account their level of economic development and their financial needs, in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

67. There should be no place in the modern system of international economic relations for economic sanctions and other unilateral measures of economic pressure against States or their economic entities. Such politically motivated decisions not only restricted the economic basis of bilateral cooperation but also affected the development of international trade as a whole, undermining the sovereign equality of States and violating the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the rules of the multilateral trading system.

68. Since the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/138), Belarus had become the target not only of attacks but also of economic sanctions because of the choice its people had made in its presidential election. He wished to draw attention to the letter from the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations reproduced in the annex to document A/66/323, in which the Permanent Mission stressed its belief that the politically motivated decision by the Government of the United States of America to impose restrictive economic measures against the Republic of Belarus was unjustified and illegal. His delegation firmly believed that unless the practice of adopting economic measures for the purpose of political and economic coercion was eradicated, the international community would be unable to build up the multilateral trading system and prepare to meet current and future challenges.

69. **Ms. Thakur** (India) said that the economic recovery continued to be fragile and halting and the prospects for global trade were not encouraging. The sovereign debt crisis in Europe and recessionary trends in the United States of America, Europe and Japan had severe repercussions for developing countries. Her delegation hoped that European and other developed economies would take prompt and effective action to calm the capital and financial markets and avert a double-dip recession. In order to act as an engine for development, the international trade framework should remove barriers, eschew protectionism and enhance market access for developing countries. Her delegation was pleased that the G-20 was focusing on strict financial sector regulation and policies emphasizing income growth as the basis for sustained and balanced development. Transforming trade dynamism into

greater income opportunities through job creation remained a critical challenge.

70. Growing commodity price volatility was having a negative impact on global food and energy security and left developing countries, and in particular least developed countries, highly vulnerable to external shocks. The increasing financialization of commodities markets had become a matter of deep concern for most developing countries. Innovative and coherent policies would be needed at national, regional and international levels in order to ensure that price volatility did not impede growth and poverty eradication efforts. India welcomed the G-20 Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture and looked forward to the establishment of the Agricultural Market Information System. Her Government believed that commodity-dependent developing countries should pursue a more diversified export basket, including high value processed agricultural commodities.

71. Although the least developed countries overwhelmingly depended on trade as an engine of growth and development, their share in global trade in 2010 had been less than 1 per cent. It was therefore important to create an enabling international environment and promptly establish duty-free and quota-free market access for LDCs. A fair, balanced and equitable outcome to the Doha Round could make international trade a vehicle for growth and development. The reform of global financial and economic institutions lay at the heart of creating a more responsive, equitable and democratic global trading order.

72. **Mr. Chen** Jianping (China) said that the slow pace of recovery of the global economy, combined with growing frictions in international trade and the volatility of the financial markets, rendered all the more compelling the need for progress in the Doha Round negotiations and the further opening up of markets. The international community should take firm steps to resist protectionism, should strictly respect the Doha mandate of the WTO and should provide assistance to developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, with a view to promoting development through trade.

73. Reaffirming China's commitment to an open and fair international trading system and its compliance with WTO standards on tariffs, he pointed out that the continued growth of his country's foreign trade was bringing extensive benefits to other countries, notably developing countries. In that context, he observed that China was the largest importer of goods from least developed countries and reaffirmed its undertaking thenceforth to import at least 95 per cent of those goods at a zero tariff rate, in pursuit of its commitment to promoting common development, fostering universal prosperity and shaping a harmonious world.

74. **Mr. Igali** (Nigeria) said that efforts to resolve the crisis in the global economy required an integrated approach, which would especially enhance the capacity of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. International trade could not remain hostage to the narrow interests of the global rich. Developing countries' efforts to implement reform continued to be frustrated by the breakdown in the Doha Round; there was growing momentum towards innovative strategies to strike a balance between restrictive trade policies and trade liberalization.

75. Nigeria was working to integrate its economy into the global system through progressive liberalization to enhance the competitiveness of domestic industries, effective participation in trade negotiations, promotion of transfer, acquisition and adoption of appropriate technologies and support for regional integration and cooperation. His Government had made significant progress in agriculture as a result of its own successful policies and strategies, assisted by the World Bank, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, as well as a number of initiatives on commodities.

76. His delegation called for the consolidation of Aid-for-Trade programmes, delivered at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels, and better paradigms for investment inflow and strategic private-sector driven partnership between developed economies and the economics of countries such as Nigeria, which held great promise as a regional centre of growth.

77. Nigeria remained committed to the purposes of WTO and called for the prompt conclusion of the Doha Round in order to better integrate the developing countries in international trade and eliminate distortions and inequalities in trade practices and investment inflows.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

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Summary record of the joint meeting of the Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council on "Investing in productive capacities for job-rich growth"

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 27 October 2011, at 3 p.m.

Co-Chair: Mr. Kapambwe (President, Economic and Social Council)......... (Zambia)

Co-Chair: Mr. Momen (Chair, Second Committee)...................... (Bangladesh)

Panellists:

Ms. Bachelet (Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women)

Mr. Hirsch (Président, Agence du Service Civique)

Mr. Jomo (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) (Moderator)

Mr. Somavia (Director-General, International Labour Organization)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Panel discussion on "Investing in productive capacities for job-rich growth"

1. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Co-Chair) welcomed participants to the panel discussion on "Investing in productive capacities for job-rich growth" which had been organized jointly by the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee. The topic was complementary to the Council's theme for its 2012 Annual Ministerial Review, entitled "Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals".

2. The global economic and financial situation was in a period of uncertainty. Fiscal and sovereign debt crises had been compounded by highly volatile stock and commodity markets, while the economic and financial crisis had generated a global jobs crisis. High food prices, unemployment and underemployment had triggered expressions of social discontent around the world. Without access to broad social safety nets, the most vulnerable and marginalized populations were experiencing the worst effects, falling deeper into poverty or struggling to sustain their livelihoods.

3. There was an urgent need for policymakers to consolidate their efforts to tackle the many interconnected challenges. A more inclusive and balanced growth strategy would boost productive capacity and promote job-rich growth. More effective and efficient investment in productive capacities was therefore an indispensable response, not only to the current jobs crisis, but also to enable sustained and equitable economic growth and sustainable development.

4. **Ms. Bachelet** (Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that she welcomed the panel discussion as an opportunity to share the key messages of the recently launched report of the Social Protection Floor Advisory Group (SPFAG), entitled "Social protection floor for a fair and inclusive globalization". The report had been developed within the framework of the social protection floor initiative adopted by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) currently led the initiative, with the support of 17 other international agencies, development partners and civil society.

5. At its substantive session of 2011, the Economic and Social Council had adopted draft resolution E/2011/L.21/Rev.1, in which it recognized the need to promote and realize basic social protection in order to achieve decent work in all countries. The idea was not new — the right to social protection went back to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights — yet access to social protection services remained a privilege of the few, despite the enormous growth in gross domestic product per capita in the six decades since the Declaration was adopted. Seventy-five per cent of the world's population did not have adequate social security coverage. Millions of people continued to live on under $2 per day and without access to sanitation and safe drinking water. The exclusion of so many people from the benefits of economic growth represented a tremendous waste of human potential and pointed to serious problems with the way in which societies were evolving. The growing ageing population also made the limited access to social services an urgent matter of concern.

6. The SPFAG report demonstrated how social protection floors were the missing element for achieving fair globalization. Countries with strong social protection systems, most notably several countries in Latin America, had proved to be more resilient to economic shocks and had achieved better results in terms of sustainable development than countries without such systems. Investing in social protection was a win-win situation in that it brought about macroeconomic stability in the short term and increased human productivity in the long term. The experience of many countries, including low-income countries, had shown that with the right institutions and funding mechanisms in place, establishing social protection systems was a feasible prospect. North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation was a fundamental component of that process. However, while international partners could assist with aspects such as designing schemes, transferring technology and providing initial funding, social protection initiatives could not succeed without the political will of the national Government.

7. As President of Chile, she had placed social protection at the heart of her administration. Her Government had made large investments in improving

access to water, housing and other basic services, and especially in enhancing child development and gender equality. Those efforts had provided several important lessons in developing a social protection system. First, policy coherence must be a central consideration. Unemployment could not be confronted without considering educational opportunities, which in turn depended on health outcomes, which were connected to issues such as sanitation and water. Policy initiatives should therefore span multiple sectors and translate into coordinated actions. Second, the provision of basic services to the people most in need should be considered the bare minimum investment. The development of a social protection system was a gradual process and its financial sustainability was a critical consideration. Provision of the most basic services to people living in extreme poverty was a small investment that would make an enormous difference in their lives. Third, provision of social protection should be about empowering and supporting people. The aim was not to create dependency but rather to unlock the productive capacity of men and women as workers, employers, consumers and citizens. The concept of the social protection floor took into account those key lessons. Through social transfers in cash or in kind, such as pensions, child benefits and employment guarantees, a social protection floor guaranteed access to basic services to all and ensured that no one lived below an established income level.

8. The SPFAG report highlighted key considerations for the development of a social protection floor. For example, adequate political will would eliminate obstacles and could set the standards that were desired. The sustainability of social protection at the national level was another important consideration and had been shown to be feasible. For example, an analysis by ILO together with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had found that maintaining basic social protection programmes in developing countries such as Benin and El Salvador could cost as little as 1 to 2 per cent of their gross domestic product. Furthermore, in the long term, social protection schemes boosted aggregate demand and generated tax revenues.

9. The design and implementation of a social protection floor should involve dialogue between Government and civil society. In addition, while the concept of the social protection floor had universal application, its development should be tailored to a country's specific infrastructure, economic constraints and political dynamics. Lastly, the social protection floor should be understood as a first step to achieving full social protection. As a Government's fiscal space widened, the levels of protection offered should increase.

10. The report showcased success stories from around the world and was intended to inspire Government officials at all levels to implement policies that drew on the concept of the social protection floor as part of a coherent strategy to advance a fair and inclusive globalization process.

11. **Mr. Jomo** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), said that the report was a timely contribution, as it came in the wake of much social unrest, including the *Indignados* movement in Spain and the many "Occupy" movements around the world.

12. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that, as noted in the report, his Government believed that a social protection floor played a critical role in eradicating poverty and preparing people for insertion into the labour market through decent work. The Chilean legislature had recently manifested its commitment to supporting families by increasing the legal maternity leave period from three months to six months. In addition, a bill to provide funds directly to families living in extreme poverty was under consideration. A ministry dedicated specifically to social development had been created to design and implement such policies and programmes, in cooperation with other Government bodies and civil society.

13. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal) said that the social protection floor initiative was particularly relevant to low-income countries. His own Government had attempted to provide social services through pensions, support for widows and other programmes. However, in a context in which 70 per cent of the population was living on under $2 per day, capacity constraints, including a lack of institutional and human resources, limited the reach and sustainability of any social protection floor initiative. He asked whether the concept had been analysed from the perspective of low-income and least developed countries and whether recommendations were available in terms of leveraging support for improving policy coherence and productive capacity.

14. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that social protection was at the heart of his Government's long-

term development plan. He requested an assessment of the links between the recommendations set out in the report and the Istanbul Programme of Action. He also asked whether the report would be used as an advocacy tool at the upcoming meeting of the Group of 20 (G-20).

15. **Ms. Montel** (France) thanked Ms. Bachelet for her leadership and work with the G-20 and said that she supported the second question by the representative of Bangladesh.

16. **Mr. Almeida** (Brazil) said that the issue of social protection was critical to achieving sustainable development and must be at the centre of the agenda of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Social protection floors were not only affordable, but paid for themselves, as they mitigated the effects of economic crises. His Government fully supported the social protection floor initiative.

17. **Ms. Bachelet** (Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of UN-Women) said that the concept of the social protection floor was not prescriptive; each Government should identify its own needs and priorities and approach social protection as a gradual process in tandem with its efforts at building capacity and financial sustainability. Many developing countries, including Bangladesh, while not yet implementing a full social protection system, had achieved extraordinary results with their programmes in areas such as health and education. The Governments of least developed countries could determine the most appropriate place to start.

18. While the report focused on low-income countries and provided relevant examples, it could also apply to developed countries. Every society had needs and every system had room for improvements. Her work as President of Chile to expand social benefits and opportunities had built on the investments of previous administrations in institutional capacity. The report provided some analysis of how to build fiscal space for social programmes. For example, IMF had found that the long-term costs of not investing in health care services, including training of human resources, were much greater than making such investments. The report was intended to be an advocacy tool and would be launched in different regions. It was written for decision-makers and gave the social, economic and political reasoning for investment in social protection floors. ILO and WHO were developing strategies to encourage its use by Governments, civil society and labour unions as a basis for action.

19. She had been working closely with the presidency of the G-20, which had placed social protection at the centre of its agenda. The G-20 finance ministers had recognized the need for social protection systems both in developed and developing countries. Work also needed to be done with subregional groups and other groupings, as it was clear that some countries needed financial and technical support to initiate programmes.

20. **Mr. Somavia** (Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that he wished to specifically address the question of whether there were alternative development models that countries could pursue given the constrained policy environment. The question was particularly pressing in view of the upcoming 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Alternative development models were possible, but their implementation involved examining the origins of the current crisis. The issue was both structural and systemic, as the economic and financial crisis was a result of the policies that had been in place. The international community must analyse why emerging countries had weathered the crisis better than developed countries and had avoided the subsequent sovereign debt crisis.

21. The growth and globalization model which was in place had become progressively less efficient. It had increased social inequality, caused damage to the environment, favoured the financial system and multinational corporations, and promoted an export-led system without regard for the domestic expansion of markets. Macroeconomic policy had trumped social policy, resulting in high levels of growth with job shortages. In addition, the reigning approach to finance and economics had transformed technical tools into ideology. For example, the systemic application of deregulation had overvalued the capacity of markets to self-regulate and undervalued Government's role in regulation. A dogmatic adherence to other tenets, such as "grow first and distribute later", had undermined the role of public policy, the dignity of work and respect for the environment and ultimately created the current state of global discontent. The development and implementation of policy must return to a technical view of the tools of economics, to be used in

accordance with the requirements of a particular situation.

22. The United Nations was the best place to assemble ideas and drive policy in a different direction. It was the most credible space to conduct the appropriate negotiations and to gather the views of different groups, ranging from the least developed countries to the European Union. The challenge was great, but the opportunity was even greater. The concept of open economies and societies made it possible to orient markets towards different outcomes. While authorities viewed civic discontent in political terms, focusing on whether the unrest could be leveraged to influence the next election, people were demanding that Governments and the private sector should find ways to create decent jobs, share the common wealth, preserve the environment, offer people a voice and provide basic social protection.

23. He proposed two concepts for discussion: the need for a new era of social justice, and the possibility of a greener and fairer system of globalization. Under the old model, the focus on the financial economy had drawn resources away from the real economy. Governments had cut taxes, while workers incurred the debt used to buy out the financial system. New ways of thinking could make social investment seem feasible. The first change must be in the criteria for determining the success of national policy. For example, instead of judging success based on the percentage of growth and per capita income, which masked issues such as inequality, a new model would judge the success of a policy based on whether it had reduced the work deficit or expanded the space for social dialogue. A focus on increasing productive capacity and developing a social protection floor offered a potential for real change in the globalization pattern.

24. It could be argued that such investments were not practical in a time of crisis. However, short-term measures based on the classical macroeconomic policies did not actually provide a solution. Sacrifices were inevitable, but societies would adapt to a change in direction if they believed resources were being shared more fairly rather than simply being used to save the financial sector. The opportunity for creativity in shaping policy had never been so great. Over the past 15 years, emerging countries in Latin America and Asia had paid back their IMF loans and had been able to respond to the economic crisis on their own terms. The highly influential position of the Governments of China, Brazil and Indonesia within the G-20 was evidence of their intellectual autonomy in terms of policy direction. The United Nations must absorb this new reality and place it at the service of Governments through a strong and challenging mandate.

25. **Mr. Jomo** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that much of the current unrest could be attributed to the effects of the unemployment crisis on young people. Many of them had had to delay the start of their careers, which had implications for their professional development and lives. Furthermore, in less developed economies, the problem of underemployment had been exacerbated.

26. It should be recalled that the economic situation before the crisis had been far from ideal. While sub-Saharan African had experienced growth for the first time, that had resulted from capital-intensive investments in areas such as mining, which had not improved employment prospects. In the United States of America, a policy of easy credit that had been implemented following the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2001 had led to the recent sub-prime mortgage crisis and over-investment in profitable sectors by the financial sector. Many Governments had maintained a policy of easy credit following the worldwide economic and financial crisis, yet there was now a reluctance to invest in productive capacity owing to capacity overhang.

27. The Global Green New Deal offered innovative thinking to achieve economic recovery. The proposal called for sustained investments, including investment in job creation and, most importantly, in green growth. Improving the standard of living in developing countries was not possible without access to cheap energy. Despite progress in the production of renewable energy, it was still more expensive per unit than energy produced through fossil fuels. Rather than raising the cost of energy and placing the burden on the poor, green growth promoted the generation of renewable energy through cross-subsidization, including through feed-in tariff arrangements, by which electricity distribution companies purchased different types of energy at varying prices. Investments in energy research had increased and per-unit costs had decreased when the learning process had not been impeded by intellectual property rights. Another component of green growth was investment in research to increase the productivity of food crops. Investments

in the 1960s and 1970s had yielded a significant increase in maize, wheat and rice production, but public funding for agricultural research had since collapsed. Lastly, green growth involved enhancing productive capacity and investment in green infrastructure, which improved the living conditions for people in an environmentally sustainable manner.

28. The great challenge of pursuing development while confronting the effects of global warming and recovering from the economic, jobs and food crisis offered an opportunity to invest significantly in productive capacity. Countries with savings had faced the crisis well, but their savings were tied up in low-yielding treasury bonds. Resources could be redeployed in ways that enhanced productive capacity for job-rich growth. Financial facilities with a sense of mission were needed not only to overcome the crisis, but to create conditions for a better life and future for all.

29. **Mr. Galvez** (Chile) asked what role the United Nations should play in promoting greener and more inclusive growth. He recalled that the United Nations had been highly visible in the 1990s, notably because of the series of summits meetings and international conferences; at the current time, however, with the G-20 moving to centre stage, multilateralism could be at risk. Since ILO was working with the G-20, it could perhaps act as a bridge and give indications to the various actors as to how to act in order to complement each other.

30. He believed that a new form of intellectual property rights was needed as part of the new economic model being discussed. He asked for views on how and why the current arrangement of intellectual property rights was not working in favour of fairer and more inclusive growth and what form such rights would need to take in order to support development and at the same time protect the rights of people who were creative and brought ideas into the world.

31. **Mr. Stenvold** (Norway) recalled that some stakeholders had subscribed for more than a decade to the analysis and prescriptions put forward by Mr. Somavia. Unfortunately, up until 2008, very few people had been prepared to listen to those views, which had been dismissed as naïve negativism. The people who did hold those views, had been optimistic at the fall of Lehman Brothers, thinking that finally the decision-makers would listen to their analysis, but instead, a couple of years later, the world had more or less reverted to the same economic philosophy and model. He wondered why that had happened.

32. **Mr. Almeida** (Brazil) observed that the current situation represented an emerging new paradigm. He recalled that in the 1950s and 1960s, the emphasis had been on industrialization, which at the time had been almost a synonym for development. By contrast, the concept of the social protection floor had moved the discussion back towards the people-centred and human development approach that had prevailed from the 1990s until very recently, and that had resulted in the Millennium Development Goals. He wondered whether the world was now moving towards a convergence of the various approaches, one that could be crystallized at the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

33. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) suggested that the World Trade Organization and the International Organization for Migration should also be involved in the new paradigm, and asked whether ILO was in discussions with them. He asked whether the Global Green New Deal was still a work in progress or a closed chapter.

34. **Ms. Montel** (France) noted that the SPFAG report had served to inform the work of the ministers of labour, and of development, of the G-20, both groups having met in September 2011. Their conclusions had been transmitted to the heads of State who would meet in November 2011 in Cannes, France, as the issue of the social dimension of globalization would certainly be taken up at that meeting. The crisis would not be brought under control without a structural and long-term approach. That was the approach being taken by the French presidency of the G-20, which held the view that the social protection floor concept was at the heart of inclusive, balanced and sustainable growth. Considering growth in terms of gross domestic product was no longer sufficient; the terms of the analysis must be widened. Another important aspect of the social protection floor concept was that it was counter-cyclical, which was fundamentally important in the context of the crisis. She asked for the views of the panellists on the actions of the French G-20 presidency, and also for information on the collaboration between ILO and IMF.

35. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal) observed that the current economic development paradigm was fraught with an

inherent contradiction, in that the focus was exclusively on increasing productivity, which entailed using technology, but that in turn would lead to losses of jobs. Increasing market efficiency without a commensurate increase in aggregate demand meant that an overall recovery of the economy would never be possible. He wondered how it was possible to ensure a high level of productivity and growth but at the same time an increase in employment. A new development model would be required.

36. He asked how the rise of the idea of the social dimension of economic growth impacted the macroeconomic stability framework that was the main concern of the international financial institutions, and whether the latter were now more sensitive to that issue. Noting that the major obstacles impeding resolution of the food crisis were the lack of investment in agriculture over the long term, speculation, and the diversion of foodstuffs to make biofuels, he asked how those obstacles could be overcome.

37. **Mr. Igali** (Nigeria) said that the report and the subsequent discussion had made it clear that there was currently a high level of discontent and social alienation in the world. The international community must scale up its efforts to provide help to the most vulnerable sectors of society, especially in the developing countries, where there were no jobs and no prospects. Particular focus was needed on improving the agricultural sector, which was still the mainstay of many countries in the developing world; agricultural productivity needed to be increased, and access to markets improved.

38. **Ms. Kage** (Germany) said that it was important to translate the abstract concept of the social protection floor into practical issues like health, water and environmental matters. Finding solutions was very complicated, and even in Germany there was a constant debate about whether the country could afford its generous system of social protection. That was not an issue that could be solved once and for all, but rather a process that was under constant adaptation.

39. The crisis had clearly revealed the value of the social protection floor, which had significantly helped in the recovery, thereby putting its cost into perspective. What was needed was social consensus and a generational contract; people had to understand that social protection was not free; everybody had to contribute, through their taxes. While, based on a social consensus, company and labour representatives could come together with the government to discuss solutions, the basic question was who really represented the jobless.

40. **Ms. Williams** (Grenada) said that the phenomenon of jobless growth had created a tremendous amount of anxiety, because growth had always been coupled with job creation and expansion. Now it appeared that technological innovation was shedding jobs, which meant that the developing countries had to choose between growth and job creation. The emphasis of the current discussion, on how to achieve growth that was job-rich, was greatly to be welcomed. The investments that were made in social protection to help the large constituency of persons who were in need of social support could be the first brick in the road towards a new economy.

41. **Mr. Hirsch** (Président, Agence du Service Civique) said that the SPFAG report had not been written by social experts for social experts; much of the inspiration for the report had come from economists from IMF, the World Bank and academia, who had recognized shortly after the crisis that one of its root causes was the lack of social protection. The old paradigm "grow first and distribute later" had never been truly successful: the idea now was that if social protection was provided first, people, companies and countries would then become richer. That was a theory propounded not by social experts but by economists.

42. In writing the report, its authors had tried to create a tool which could be useful for all categories of countries. The intention had been to avoid rejection of the report by the very rich countries on the grounds that they already had social protection, or by the very poor countries on the grounds that they were too poor to offer social protection. The authors had tried to demonstrate that some matters were common to multiple countries even when they had very different levels of social protection. For instance all countries, of whatever level of development, had to consider the question of the appropriate level of out-of-pocket expenditures for health, and whether free care should be provided for the poor, for mothers, for young children, and so on. Similarly, every country had to face the question of how to finance its social protection.

43. There was a difference between safety nets and the social protection floor. The social protection floor was a concept which included the whole population, on a basis of solidarity, not only the poor population or poor countries. In terms of health, for instance, the concept would mean that a country could have health services that were available to all citizens regardless of income or status.

44. The concept of social protection had been a national issue, decided on at the national level, but it might now become an international one. Increasingly, what happened in one country had an impact on other countries. Unless all countries progressed in social protection, some countries that had built their own protection could be obliged to dismantle it. Also, in the absence of social protection, some of the current imbalances in the world would become greater, for example in the area of migration or pandemic disease. The intention would not be for the countries of the North to dictate to those of the South, however; indeed, one of the fascinating aspects of writing the report had been the exchanges of experiences between and among countries of the South.

45. **Mr. Somavia** said that he agreed that the United Nations had exercised policy leadership in the 1990s at numerous important gatherings. At he United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, it had been clear that governments were having problems with the habitual growth model and its consumption and investment patterns, and believed that the phenomenon of globalization was not sufficiently taking into account jobs growth, poverty reduction or social cohesion. He believed that the current crisis represented an opportunity for the United Nations to once again exercise leadership in ideas and policies and become an attractive setting for important negotiations to take place. In order to achieve that goal, one possible approach might be to make some of the bodies of the United Nations smaller and more agile, with their members acting on behalf of constituencies.

46. A further issue was that of the relationship between the United Nations and the G-20. At the time when the crisis had occurred, the G-20 had been the appropriate forum for taking some important and urgent decisions, as its member countries represented a large proportion of the world's economy and a significant part of its population. However, it was an open question whether that was the ideal pattern for the future.

47. The relative positions of the United Nations and the G-20 would be defined by the credibility of their ideas, the results they achieved, and whether there was a perception that they were actually capable of advancing policies that addressed people's problems. The forthcoming G-20 meeting in Cannes, France, was going to be very important because the current French presidency of the Group had firmly put the social implications of globalization on the table. He was certain that the United Nations had the capacity to develop the ideas and policies that could produce a new era of social justice and a fairer, greener and more sustainable globalization, and also had the capacity to take the internal decisions necessary to make the Organization once again a space for decision-making.

48. On the point made by the representative of Norway, he said that a key factor in the world's sliding back into a "business as usual" mode had been that in the developed world the valuation of the banks had gone up, the stock markets had gone up, and there had been modest growth, and so countries had concluded that the crisis was over. The G-20 had decided that there was a need to continue applying stimulus packages in order to secure growth, but that at the same time careful attention had to be paid to the increase in debt. The balance between stimulus and debt level had been defined at the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh, United States of America. However, by the time of the G-20 summit in Toronto, Canada, the balance had been abandoned and the issue was sovereign debt and austerity. At the Seoul summit, more attention had been paid to development issues, but the main factor at the Cannes meeting would be how to strike a balance between giving confidence to financial markets and ensuring the confidence of citizens. When the banks were rescued, it would have been better if conditions had been set, such as an obligation for them to invest a certain amount in the real economy, rather than only working in the financial economy.

49. The crisis was not a global phenomenon, nor had the reaction to it been uniform. Some of the emerging countries, as well as developed countries such as Australia, Canada, Germany and the Nordic countries, had been able to respond to the crisis much better than others precisely because they had a strong welfare system. Rather than being seen as a major cost, a healthy welfare system should be seen as making a

significant contribution both to maintaining a country's social stability and to facilitating its economic recovery.

50. What was beginning to emerge was the notion that a country's macroeconomic policy and employment or social policies had to be integrated. The conventional view had been that as a first step countries had to ensure that sound macroeconomic policies were in place, which would result in low inflation, a balanced budget and a low relationship of debt to gross domestic product. Such policies would produce growth and the growth would create jobs. In reality, however, the expected beneficial consequences of those policies had not come about. He suggested that a different approach would give better results, namely setting specific target numbers for job growth, just as targets were currently set for savings, investments or inflation. That would require a totally new mindset among economic decision-makers, but it would not require a modification in the way that the market worked: rather the decision-makers should set themselves different objectives and then organize their policies accordingly. At the same time, it would be necessary to gather new types of data, on employment and social issues, rather than, or in addition to, traditional data on trade and financial flows.

51. Another conventional idea that needed to be challenged was that, in order to increase productivity, the essential step was to liberalize the labour market. That was a massive oversimplification: sometimes more market regulation, not less, was needed. Another ideological idea was that increased productivity was, in and of itself, always a good thing. But if increased productivity negatively affected global demand, than that was obviously not beneficial. Once again, there was a need to take a fresh look at the economic theories and find a new balance. Another misconception was that increased productivity and resulting increased profits automatically made more resources available for investment in the real economy; in reality, newly-available resources tended to be invested in the financial economy, with investments in the real economy having stayed more or less stable for the last 30 years. Thus, as the representative of Brazil had suggested, an integration of diverging ideas was under way, but there was still a long way to go before the integration was complete.

52. A key component in the job growth equation was small enterprises. While it was true that multinational enterprises and large companies were more productive, and possibly offered jobs that were considered more attractive, it was the smaller companies that were going to produce the needed volume of jobs. Thus what was really needed was to increase the productivity of smaller companies, but while lip service was paid to the importance of small enterprises, policies were defined in terms of large ones.

53. Turning to the question about the relationship of ILO with other agencies, he said that ILO was collaborating with the World Trade Organization (WTO) on joint research projects. The third such project had been published recently, on the impact of trade on jobs. In the view of ILO, migration was caused primarily by a shortage of jobs. If countries were able to create more jobs, then much migration would be avoided, with all its attendant issues such as how migrants were treated, whether the sending countries could make agreements with receiving countries to ensure fair treatment, and so on. ILO was working in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, to which it had communicated its view of the overriding importance of the jobs issue.

54. He agreed with the representative of France that it had been a very important initiative to make the social dimension of globalization a major topic for the G-20 summit. As for her question on cooperation with IMF, it might be seen as surprising that the two bodies should be cooperating in examining how macroeconomic policies, employment policies and social policies could be better adapted to one another, since historically ILO had been very critical of IMF, but times had changed. As both Ms. Bachelet and Mr. Hirsch had said, one important aspect of the social protection floor concept was that it must be financially sustainable. There, the expertise of IMF could help. ILO and IMF were now working with three specific countries to determine how much fiscal space was available to them to increase the dimension of social protection.

55. He fully agreed with the comments of the representative of Nigeria concerning the need to improve the agricultural sector. He welcomed the distinction made by Mr. Hirsch between safety nets, which were extended only for a specific crisis and withdrawn when the crisis was over, and the social protection floor, which was conceived of as being much more permanent, and as able to contribute to economic

recovery. He also welcomed the comment by the representative of Germany concerning representation of the jobless. He would frame it in wider terms, as who represented the disquiet that currently prevailed in society. The Organization had a mandated responsibility to be concerned about people — not just the most vulnerable but people in general — who at the current time were extremely uncertain as to what was happening, and increasingly convinced that the way the crisis was being dealt with did not take account of their concerns.

56. **Mr. Jomo** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), responding to the comment about intellectual property rights, recalled that, following the acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) by the international community, the Doha Declaration had stated that the Agreement could and should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO members' right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all. There was no reason why the international community should not work towards having other exceptions covering new green technologies, renewable energy and so on, which would make those new technologies much more accessible

57. The Global Green New Deal still had not gained sufficient support. As had been said, the world was in a situation of tremendous disquiet, and under the French presidency of the G-20 a range of new issues had been raised which had not previously been addressed by the Group. The G-20, as the forum of the largest economies in the world, could bring those issues to the multilateral institutions for debate and, it was to be hoped, implementation.

58. On the issue of the food crisis, the French presidency of the G-20 had opened up the whole question of commodity price volatility. The debate in the G-20 basically pitted those who saw the issues in terms of supply and demand against those who emphasized that the world had changed because the financialization of commodity futures and options markets had fundamentally changed the nature of those markets and made them far more procyclical. However, there was an additional layer of complication in that if a country simply increased food production, that did not necessarily mean that its people would have greater food security, particularly if the majority of the additional food was intended for export or for making biofuels. There were many aspects still to be explored.

59. **Mr. Monem** (Co-Chair) said that although the global jobs crisis appeared to be a direct after-effect of the economic and financial crisis, it could actually be a structural problem built up over the years and resulting from a variety of reasons such as, for example, the application of new labour-saving technology and reduced attention to job-rich growth. In recent years unemployment and underemployment, including disguised unemployment, had increased significantly both in developed and in developing countries. The linkage between unemployment and poverty also threatened much of the progress that had been achieved towards the Millennium Development Goals.

60. The youth and gender dimensions of the jobs crisis were particularly troubling and urgent. He agreed with Mr. Somavia that the world could not emerge from the crisis by means of the policy prescriptions that had prevailed for years. New thinking was needed, new policy prescriptions, and a new financial and economic infrastructure. The international community had to find strong political commitment and a new mindset, one that was willing to face challenges, such as the recommendations for a social protection floor as a part of a new development model. The world must also rebalance macroeconomic policies by channelling greater resources to supporting the productive sectors, creating more jobs and investing in infrastructure, agriculture, health and education.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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A/C.2/66/SR.27

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Second Committee

Summary record of the 27th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 28 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Zdorov (Vice-Chair) .... (Belarus)

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Agenda item 17: Macroeconomic policy questions (*continued*)

(a) International trade and development (*continued*)

(d) Commodities (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Zdorov (Belarus), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 17: Macroeconomic policy questions (*continued*) (A/66/388)

(a) International trade and development (*continued*) (A/66/185, A/66/138, A/66/15 (Part I), A/66/15 (Part II), A/66/I5 (Part III), A/66/15 (Part IV), A/66/323 and A/C.2/66/4)

(d) Commodities (*continued*) (A/66/207)

1. **Mr. Nassem** (Pakistan) said that to resolve the impasse in the Doha Round multilateral trade negotiations and unleash the development potential of trade through a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, emphasis should be placed on liberalizing the agricultural sector and the movement of persons under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), eliminating non-tariff barriers, ensuring special treatment for developing countries and promoting a development-oriented regime for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. Failure to break the stalemate would weaken the World Trade Organization (WTO) and further distort the world trading system. It was crucial that countries should avoid adopting protectionist measures. Moreover, volatility in commodity markets should be approached from a poverty reduction and development perspective. There was a need for increased and sustained investment in commodities production with a view to addressing supply-demand imbalances, and for monitoring the impact of speculation in commodity futures.

2. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government was committed to the multilateral system of international trade, and accordingly aspired to join WTO. The economic and political barriers to WTO membership confronting developing States should be eliminated.

3. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries" (A/66/138) outlined the adverse impacts on the long-term growth prospects of States targeted by such measures and on the prosperity of their people. The Syrian Arab Republic was being so targeted by the United States of America, the members of the European Union, and a number of other States; details could be found in document A/C.2/66/4. Such measures were not only unethical, they were also illegal, being inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, they had a serious negative impact on the international system of trade, creating a climate of uncertainty about the soundness of that system and the good faith of the developed States and impeding the achievement of agreed development goals. States that imposed such measures on other States should desist forthwith, out of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the latter and concern for their own reputation.

4. **Archbishop Chullikatt** (Observer for the Holy See), noting that the current international trading system was governed by inequities, regretted that prospects for trade reform currently looked more remote than ever, despite the pledges made at the G-20 meeting held in September 2009 to prevent a re-emergence of trade protectionism and to conclude the Doha Round by the end of 2010. The developed countries should summon the political courage necessary for promoting fair trade. Although most of the developed world was experiencing economic difficulties and, in the wake of trade reform, job losses, even a modest reduction of protectionist measures on certain agricultural products would have a considerable impact on the livelihoods of numerous small farmers in developing countries. Agriculture was a pivotal sector for many such countries because the majority of the world's poor lived in rural areas and because, unlike developed countries, developing countries were unable to protect their farming population. Prospects and opportunities for the developing countries could be improved through new trade accords seeking pro-poor outcomes, trade agreements among those countries for agricultural and manufactured products, and aid-for-trade measures designed to strengthen their transport infrastructure, storage facilities and trade institutions.

5. **Ms. Luna** (Mexico) expressed concern about the impact of high commodity prices on economic recovery and the increasing financial speculation in the global food markets. In that connection, Mexico favoured a multilateral trade system conducive to economic growth and development; it supported United Nations efforts to promote international cooperation aimed at building the trade capacities of

developing countries and hoped for tangible progress through the Doha Round negotiations. Viewing trade as a strategic contributor to development, Mexico was concerned by the repercussions of the global financial and economic crisis on international trade, and by the fragile and uneven recovery trade flows. In that context, Mexico had actively participated in the fifty-second executive session of the Trade and Development Board, held in Geneva on 11-12 April 2011 in preparation for the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII), scheduled to take place in Doha on 21-26 April 2012. It hoped that the UNCTAD agenda would comprehensively address trade and development issues, including questions related to financing, technology, investment and sustainable development, and supported strengthening North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation aimed at inclusive development and sustainable growth.

6. **Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique) said that the global economic and financial crisis led to significant changes in Mozambique's trade relations. Substantial expansion and diversification of its export base had been complemented by major reforms of import tariff schedules, leading to a positive overall outcome. The remaining challenges required tackling supply-side constraints to allow Mozambican exporters access to crucial international markets and included improving infrastructure to promote trade competitiveness and reduce production costs.

7. Aid for trade was important to enhancing and diversifying production capacity, particularly in the least developed countries; and justified the mobilization of additional resources in the form of grants. Moreover, in view of continuing disagreements in the Doha Round negotiations, Mozambique called on all parties to seek a positive conclusion at the Eighth Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference so that developing countries could fully participate in the global economy and share the benefits of the multilateral trading system. Lastly, for developing countries to be able to face the impact of commodity price volatility, which particularly affected economies that were net food importers or produced tropical crops, the international community should help the countries concerned to create national capacities for adaptation and resilience.

8. **Mr. Mchumo** (Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)) said that CFC probably remained the strongest embodiment of international consensus on the need to address commodity dependence as a global development problem. The current arsenal of policy responses and international instruments for dealing with various aspects of such dependence included measures going beyond supply management, such as risk mitigation by risk transfer and risk management, the horizontal and vertical diversification of the commodity sector, value chain transparency and efficiency improvement, income support measures and revenue management. The international consensus required for global supply management to have any practical effect had not fully materialized in over 20 years of CFC operations. Consequently, the renewed attention paid by the G-20 to market transparency as a means of ensuring food market stability was welcome. In the run-up to UNCTAD XIII, CFC would do its part in attending to the relevant issues in the light of rapidly expanding knowledge of the commodity market as a mirror of global capital movements.

9. Meanwhile, commodity-dependent countries could take advantage of the opportunities emerging in commodity markets through targeted action leading to a self-reinforcing cycle of economic growth in commodity sectors. Relevant operations should be undertaken as close as possible to the primary producers and allow the private sector, financiers in particular, to participate as early as possible. Difficulties encountered in reducing commodity market volatility should not discourage efforts to address the developing countries' commodity-related vulnerability, which was also a symptom of failing attempts to launch sustained and diversified economic growth. In that connection, rising income inequality, social inequity and lack of opportunities for the poor were of particular concern.

10. Finding new ways to take commodity-dependent developing countries out of the circle of commodity dependence involved agricultural productivity enhancement through technology and knowledge, effective use of productive resources and water, improved market linkages and direct risk transfer and mitigation to reduce the vulnerability of producers. The Second Committee should articulate the need for an open and flexible strategy to deal with commodities as a pillar of sustainable global growth and development.

11. **Ms. Barth** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that open markets had the ability to free countries from the constraints of their local economies,

ensure gains in productivity through greater efficiency and technological progress, and provide a stimulus for the world economy. On the other hand, trade liberalization was associated with both job destruction and job creation. In the short run, the resulting net employment effects could be positive or negative, depending on such country-specific factors as the functioning of the labour and product markets. In the long run, however, the efficiency gains caused by trade liberalization were expected to lead to positive overall employment effects, in terms of quantity of jobs or wages earned. Nevertheless, where trade liberalization affected parts of the labour force negatively, labour and social policies were required in order to redistribute some of the gains from trade.

12. For the least developed countries, integration into the world economy through trade and investment was a key to development. However, those countries should have the policy space to decide how fast and how far to reduce protection for their own producers, and must invest in skills, employability and a basic social protection floor. To boost growth and jobs on a sustained basis, open trade must be accompanied by policies to address adjustment problems and distributional concerns and to promote macroeconomic stability, employment, social protection and education. A successful conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda would mean that Governments continued to oppose protectionism and sought new opportunities for growth, development and job creation through trade.

13. **Mr. Bredel** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that, for countries with small domestic economies, effective integration into regional and global trade promised greatly expanded demand for their goods, with concomitant job creation and income generation to reduce poverty and inequality. Many developing countries were severely challenged by the vicious cycle of volatility caused by overreliance on primary commodities and by fluctuating commodity prices, and faced the challenge of diversifying their production and export base towards manufactured goods, which often provided stronger and more sustained growth stimuli than other types of exports. Globalization had transformed the concept of industrial development "trade in tasks" had significantly grown in importance, especially as a means where by developing countries could integrate into international market; and the strong growth of the emerging economies had led to an increase in trading opportunities, particularly through South-South cooperation and regional trade.

14. Over and above preferential tariffs, developing countries needed to develop competitive supply capacities, ensure conformity of their products to the requirements of competitive markets. Restrictive rules of origin and non-tariff barriers in the form of health and safety, quality and environmental standards imposed considerable challenges. Building trade capacity to assist developing countries and transition economies in increasing and diversifying their exports, was a cornerstone of the technical cooperation programmes and trade-related assistance work of UNIDO, which participated in, inter alia, the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the InterAgency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity of the United Nations Chief Executives Board; and had coordinated the 2010 edition of the United Nations Inter-Agency Resource Guide on Trade Capacity Building. UNIDO would continue to advocate that trade-related challenges should be placed at the centre of the international development debate.

The meeting rose at 10.54 a.m.

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Second Committee

Summary record of the 28th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 31 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Momen .... (Bangladesh)

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Agenda item 19: Sustainable development

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(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its eleventh special session

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(i) Sustainable mountain development

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar), President of the General Assembly, said that the international community should approach the issues to be addressed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development with an increased sense of urgency and responsibility. The Conference should reconfirm the principles and commitments agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (Rio Principles), as well as those set out in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation). The benefits of sustainable development should be extended to people of all countries, in particular countries in special situations.

2. It was essential to build consensus, enhance coordination and cooperation and approve an efficient and effective governance framework for sustainable development. Sufficient political will was required at both the national and international levels in order to ensure the timely provision of resources. Member States that were in position to do so should provide financial support to developing countries requiring assistance in order to participate in the preparatory processes for the Conference. He would do his utmost to enable Member States to exchange lessons learned, bridge the gaps and build consensus leading up to the Conference.

3. It was also necessary to improve disaster prevention and response in order to reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities, build resilience and promote sustainable development. The capacity of the United Nations system to address disaster risk reduction and prevention should continue to be strengthened.

4. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/160, he had attended the opening meeting of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa in order to report on the outcome of the September 2011 High-level Meeting on the theme "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication". It had been evident that the international community was ready to take bold action to address desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development. Inaction risked jeopardizing food security, poverty eradication efforts and biodiversity and could lead to forced migration, adverse impacts on climate change, deforestation, political instability and conflict. He urged the Committee to place desertification, land degradation and drought at the centre of the deliberations at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

5. Looking ahead to the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, he urged Member States to support concrete action on mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology by adopting a comprehensive, equitable and balanced Conference outcome based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. Such an outcome would strengthen global efforts to combat climate change and build on the achievements of the 2010 Cancún Conference.

6. Emphasizing the urgent need to reverse biodiversity loss, he welcomed the finalization and adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization and the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The activities undertaken during the International Year of Biodiversity to generate advocacy and awareness were commendable and he looked forward to the adoption of further activities during the United Nations Decade for Biodiversity.

7. In conclusion, he underscored the commitment and leadership demonstrated by the Executive Secretaries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and by their staff in the field. The work of the Second Committee would provide a vital contribution to the success of the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (A/66/87, A/66/297, A/66/298, A/66/298/Corr.1, A/66/337, A/66/388 and A/66/391)

(a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (A/66/287, A/66/304 and A/C.2/66/2)

(b) **Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (A/66/218 and A/66/278)

(c) **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction** (A/66/301)

(d) **Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind** (A/66/291)

(e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (A/66/291)

(f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (A/66/291)

(g) **Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its eleventh special session** (A/66/25, Supp. No. 25)

(h) **Harmony with Nature** (A/66/302)

(i) **Sustainable mountain development** (A/66/294)

(j) **Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy** (A/66/306)

8. **Mr. Sha** Zukang (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development) introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development (A/66/298), under item 19; and on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/66/287) and on agricultural technology for development (A/66/304), both under sub-item 19 (a). He also introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on concrete recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/66/278) and on the review of United Nations system support to small island developing States (A/66/218), both under sub-item 19 (b). In addition, he introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/66/302), under sub-item 19 (h); on sustainable mountain development (A/66/294), under sub-item 19 (i); and on new and renewable sources of energy (A/66/306), under sub-item 19 (j).

9. Twenty years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the world risked irreversible environmental and ecosystem damage and increasing inequality and poverty unless urgent action was taken to overcome the obstacles to sustainable development.

10. Genuine political commitment, clear agendas and international support had led to progress in some areas since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, for example with respect to poverty reduction and increased access to water. Similarly, through the effective transfer and dissemination of ozone-friendly technology, the implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer had significantly reduced the use of ozone-depleting substances. Similar momentum — engaging all countries and underpinned by long-term political commitment and better coordination and coherence among sustainable development institutions — was required in order to accelerate sustainable development.

11. The issues discussed in detail in the reports he was introducing included the need to reverse existing patterns of resource use and depletion; increase the contribution of new and renewable sources of energy to the global energy system; introduce major changes in agriculture and rural development with a view to resolving current food, energy, water and climate challenges; and address major threats to oceans, particularly coral reefs. The vulnerabilities of small island developing States and mountain regions, both of which were disproportionately affected by global challenges, must also be addressed.

12. Noting that all the reports were relevant to the Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in 2012, he said that the report on the Implementation of

Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/66/287) provided an overview of the status of preparations for the Conference and preliminary ideas concerning its organization of work. The Committee would need to discuss the modalities of the Conference during the current session.

13. The Conference should aim to achieve a forward-looking and action-oriented outcome to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century; an implementation strategy supported by means and resources required to translate the strategy into action; and a renewed commitment by all stakeholders to spare no effort to ensure the implementation of the agreed agenda.

14. **Ms. Figueres** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), speaking by video link from Bonn, introduced the report on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Cancun, Mexico, 2010, and its follow-up (A/66/291, chap. I). The report provided an overview of the outcomes of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The report also included updates on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol.

15. The 2010 Climate Change Conference had been a success. The fact that the Cancun Agreements had been adopted at the Conference with near unanimity had demonstrated that the Parties were eager to restore confidence in the functioning of the climate change process and to capture progress made since 2008, specifically in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

16. The Agreements formed the basis for the largest collective effort the world had ever seen to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and included the most comprehensive package ever agreed by Governments to help developing countries deal with climate change. They covered, inter alia, adaptation, technology, finance, policy approaches and incentives. The Parties had subsequently achieved substantial progress in their follow-up work in the two ad hoc working groups. Implementation of the Cancun Agreements was well on track.

17. Negotiations under the Kyoto Protocol had clarified the technical issues, thereby paving the way for urgently needed political decisions. The defining challenge facing the Climate Change Conference in Durban was the need to address both the further commitments of developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol and the evolution of the broader mitigation framework under the Convention, while ensuring the differentiated participation of developing countries. In addition, progress was needed regarding long-term finance. While industrialized countries had agreed to mobilize $100 billion annually, a clear decision on a pathway to secure long-term sources of finance was now required.

18. She expressed confidence that, notwithstanding those challenges, the Climate Change Conference in Durban could be another firm step towards a full climate change regime. The Conference must produce an outcome that restored confidence in the ability of the climate change process to act decisively in addressing climate change.

19. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Secretariat), speaking by video link from Bonn, said that the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa had been an unprecedented success. Unmatched political will had prevailed in addressing all issues that had been impeding the implementation of the Convention.

20. One positive step had been the adoption of the decision concerning the governance and institutional arrangements for the Global Mechanism. The Conference had also adopted decisions concerning implementation in respect of science, technology and knowledge-sharing with a view to enabling the Convention to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification, land degradation and drought; progress in the implementation of the Convention; the mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations

Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018); collaboration with the Global Environment Facility; and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on desertification, land degradation and drought and preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

21. Three round tables on matters of the utmost importance had been held during the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties on the themes: "Desertification/land degradation and drought and food security: preserving the resource base for our food security"; "UNCCD in the context of Rio+20: addressing desertification/land degradation and drought as a cornerstone of the green economy"; and "Harnessing science knowledge for combating desertification/land degradation and drought: the path to improvement".

22. In addition, the Government of the Republic of Korea, the host country, had submitted the Changwon initiative, which aimed at furthering the implementation of the Convention and the 10-year strategic plan. The Parties had welcomed the initiative and noted its potential to enhance efforts by countries under their action programmes to address desertification, land degradation and drought.

23. The remarkable success of the session had been preceded by the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the theme "Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication". General Assembly resolution 65/160 provided details regarding the event. At the conclusion of the Meeting the President of the General Assembly had summarized the discussions and had, inter alia, underscored the importance of enhancing the implementation of the Convention and strengthening the science underlying the issues involved.

24. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/160 and the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/66/291, chap. II), he said that the document provided updates on the preparations for the High-level Meeting and reviewed the proceedings and outcomes of the ninth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the second special session of the Committee on Science and Technology. The report also described activities undertaken in the context of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification and the observance of the 2011 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought and of Land Day.

25. In addition, the report provided information on the status of collaboration with the Global Environment Facility in the light of the amendment of the GEF Instrument to list the Convention among the treaties for which the Facility served as financial mechanism. Details were also given regarding the meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions held in Bonn on 11 April 2011. The report suggested possible actions for the General Assembly to consider, including those relating to raising the profile of desertification, land degradation and drought; strengthening the scientific basis of the Convention; and the new performance review, assessment and monitoring of its implementation. It also addressed the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and encouraged the Assembly to consider the possibility of a "zero net land degradation rate" as a sustainable development target.

26. **Ms. Wahlström** (Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/66/301), said that the report provided an overview of progress at the national, regional and international levels during the past year with respect to disaster risk reduction and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. The many disasters which had occurred during the previous year had wreaked havoc in developed and developing countries alike, with particularly devastating consequences in low-income countries, especially small island developing States and least developed countries. Although some progress towards building resilience had been achieved, risk management systems and decision-making at the national, subnational and international levels required further critical development, including disaster loss accounting and integrated risk modelling, to support sound development and investment planning.

27. The midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action, the first thematic debate on disaster risk reduction, convened by the President of the General Assembly, the six regional platforms for disaster risk reduction, the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the findings of the 2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction had highlighted challenges requiring urgent attention. The Secretary-General discussed the challenges in his report and offered recommendations for addressing them.

28. For the remainder of the Hyogo Framework's lifespan and subsequently, the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction would continue to lead and coordinate efforts to establish a post-Hyogo consultative process; help Governments and partners realize the potential benefits of disaster risk reduction; provide substantive and technical support to the global, regional and national platforms; and further strengthen the evidence base to support more focused investment. Other critical activities prior to 2015 would include the biennial regional platforms, the fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in 2013; the continued production and dissemination of credible evidence to strengthen decision-making in support of disaster risk reduction through the 2013 and 2015 Global Assessment Reports on Disaster Risk Reduction; and work to scale up national disaster loss databases and tracking of disaster risk reduction investments. High priority would also be given to advocacy and outreach work in particular, including mobilizing and influencing key agents of change such as mayors, local governments, the private sector, parliamentarians and young people.

29. The Strategy secretariat would therefore continue to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields. Although many challenges remained in those areas, progress was being made. The secretariat's main priority was to promote the practical application of disaster risk reduction. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, continuing work on the Cancun Adaptation Framework, the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, and the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would provide important opportunities to incorporate disaster risk reduction into global development processes and the agreements that guided them.

30. **Ms. Castaño** (Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) New York Office), speaking on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, introduced the report of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on the work of its twenty-sixth session (A/66/25). She also introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/66/297).

31. The Council/Forum had expressed concern regarding the serious threats that documented environmental degradation, widespread changes from human activity, natural processes and the loss of ecosystem services posed to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals. The world now faced a sustainability crisis. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would provide a rare opportunity for the international community to strengthen and retool the United Nations Environment Programme in order to enable it to effectively discharge its duties as the principal United Nations environmental body and to be the leading global environmental authority.

32. She drew attention to the decisions adopted by the Council/Forum on international environmental governance; the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services; the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production; the impact of integrated environmental assessments, chemicals and wastes management; and waste management, including management of electrical and electronic waste.

33. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/66/297), she said that the report had been submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 65/147 and had been prepared by UNEP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report built on the work of the inter-agency team established for the preparation of the previous reports on the subject. She drew particular attention to paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of the report on the need for contributions to the Eastern Mediterranean Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund hosted by the Lebanon Recovery Fund.

34. **Mr. Haoliang Xu** (Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director of the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan (A/66/337). Twenty years had passed since the closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Many people in the Pavlodar, East Kazakhstan and Karaganda regions continued to suffer the negative environmental, economic, social and humanitarian consequences of the fallout from the explosions.

35. Kazakhstan was a leader in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It had closed the nuclear test site and renounced its nuclear arsenal at an early stage of its independence. Shortly after closing the site the Government had introduced social protection and health-care interventions to help the population of the affected territories recover from the devastating consequences of the nuclear explosions.

36. The United Nations and the international community had supported the Government's efforts to overcome the challenges of rehabilitation. For example, in 1999 the Government of Japan and UNDP had convened the Tokyo International Conference on Semipalatinsk, which had been co-sponsored by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Government of Kazakhstan's new Semipalatinsk Relief and Rehabilitation Programme, comprising projects in the areas of health, environment and ecology, economic recovery, humanitarian issues and information and advocacy, had received wide support at the Conference.

37. Although considerable progress had been accomplished over the years, the severity of the problems had thus far outweighed the efforts to resolve them. It was widely recognized that the time had come to move from a focus on recovery to a focus on long-term development and that the challenges could best be addressed through a comprehensive approach effectively linking the economic, social, environmental and health aspects through a strong partnership between the Government, the United Nations and all development partners. The need for such an approach was reflected in the General Assembly's request, in its resolution 63/279 on international cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan, that the Secretary-General should submit the report before the Committee under the item entitled "sustainable development". Previously, the topic had been considered under the item "humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for selected countries and regions".

38. In response to that need, a new five-year regional development programme, "Raising competitiveness of the region through innovative approaches to regional planning and social services", had been launched in 2011. He urged development partners to respond to the call by the Secretary-General in the report to support the coordination mechanisms established through the new joint programme and to make use of the programme when planning their development assistance to the region with a view to enhancing its positive impact on people's lives.

39. **Mr. Mero** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that in the light of the disasters that had struck Japan earlier in 2011 he would appreciate knowing what steps countries should take to prepare for and respond to such emergencies. The report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction did not provide much information regarding how Japan had addressed those issues.

40. **Ms. Wahlström** (Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action) said that the Japanese Government was continuing to analyse the combination of factors that had left it so vulnerable despite its excellent disaster education programmes and very strong building codes. The tsunami generated by the earthquake and the location of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant had been the major factors.

41. Japan's analyses thus far pointed to three principal issues that all countries should address. First, the relevant authorities must understand the complexities of modern industry and that knowledge should be integrated into disaster management. Secondly, countries must adapt their building codes to their individual risk profiles, adequate infrastructure financing must be provided and the authorities must fully implement and enforce the codes.

42. Thirdly, although vulnerability to disasters declined as social and economic development improved, the exposure of cities to hazards was increasing because complex societies were being built precisely where disaster risks were highest. Difficult choices must therefore be made with respect to land-use planning, and public awareness of the potential consequences of decisions taken in that regard was critical. Following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in the Tohoku region of Japan, her conversations with residents of the area, who were very well informed about disaster risks, had borne out the importance of minimizing those risks in the first place.

43. **Mr. Sembayev** (Kazakhstan) expressed his delegation's appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan and the introduction of the report by the Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director of the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. His delegation was most grateful for the joint activities being implemented in his country by a number of United Nations agencies.

44. **Mr. Bukuru** (Chief, New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Secretariat), replying to a question from **Mr. Tachie-Manson** (Ghana), said that "zero net land degradation" was a new concept but not a new practice. Its aim was to ensure that the loss of any land to degradation was offset by land restoration or reclamation. It was an attainable sustainable development target and would be discussed at the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

45. **The Chair** pointed out that the order in which speakers would address the Committee in the discussion that was about to begin had been changed on an ad hoc basis pending further consultations and would be finalized later in the day.

46. **Mr. Limeres** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the three pillars of sustainable development — economic development, social development and environmental protection — must be taken into account in order to ensure a coordinated, integrated and balanced approach to its implementation. The multilateral framework for sustainable development was to be strengthened and the basic principles on which it was founded should not be renegotiated or retracted. The international community still faced the challenge of fulfilling commitments previously agreed on with respect to sustainable development and fully integrating its three pillars.

47. The Group's overriding priorities were poverty eradication and sustainable development. The financial, economic, food and energy crises and the shortage and unsustainable use of resources undermined the developing countries' efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It urged development partners to provide increased new and additional financing, technology transfer and capacity-building for the full and prompt implementation of sustainable development actions on the ground.

48. The Group of 77 and China looked forward to an outcome of the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development signalling renewed political commitment to the sustainable development agenda that would lead to the full implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to full support for the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable development. The Conference should aim to achieve concrete results with respect to financing and access to technology; identify measures to consolidate progress achieved and overcome remaining challenges; and highlight ways to address persistent, new and emerging issues. It also urged developed countries and international and bilateral donors to provide contributions to the Commission on Sustainable Development trust fund in order to enhance the active participation of representatives from developing countries in negotiations during the preparatory process of the Conference and in the Conference itself.

49. With regard to the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Group of 77 and China

reaffirmed its support for the efforts of those States to achieve sustainable development. They faced threats to their very existence, and their plight required urgent attention. The international community must honour the commitments it had made to small island developing States in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy and their needs should be adequately addressed at the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development and reflected in its outcome document.

50. The Group of 77 and China reiterated its full support for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the policy guidance and coordination provided through the Strategy system and welcomed the results of the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

51. All countries, particularly the developed countries, must deal with the challenges posed by climate change by adhering to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to a second set of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention. The root causes of climate change, not merely their consequences, must be addressed. The Group of 77 and China called for full operationalization of the Standing Committee of the financial mechanism of the Convention, the Technology Mechanism and the Adaptation Committee at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Durban, South Africa. The Parties to Annex II of the Convention should provide the developing countries with the resources and assistance called for in article 4, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the Convention, and adaptation and mitigation should both be adequately financed.

52. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was an important tool for achieving food security, poverty eradication and sustainable development and for promoting sustainable land use in drylands. The secretariats of the three Rio Conventions should enhance their cooperation at the national level, as well as with the United Nations organizations and agencies, while respecting their individual mandates. The Group underlined the relevance of the core issues of the Convention to Combat Desertification to the objectives and themes of the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development and emphasized the need to raise the profile of desertification, land degradation and drought among the priority issues to be addressed by the Conference.

53. The unsustainable use of resources threatened to increase poverty and undermine development. It was therefore necessary to promote action to prevent the loss of biodiversity and to attach a sense of urgency to achieving the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Group welcomed the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 as the overarching biodiversity framework; the ongoing efforts to translate the Aichi Biodiversity Targets into national biodiversity strategies and action plans; and the decision to declare 2011-2020 the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. It also reaffirmed the importance of the Multi-year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development, which would be considered for adoption at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and it anticipated that United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would renew and strengthen political commitment to the biodiversity protection agenda.

54. The Group of 77 and China took note of the report of the Governing Council of UNEP on its twenty-sixth regular session. Concrete measures should be taken to ensure the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, which was intended to improve developing countries' ability to address environmental challenges. The United Nations should substantially increase resource allocations to UNEP's regular budget in order demonstrate, in more than words, its commitment to addressing the world's dire environmental challenges.

55. With regard to the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, it was necessary to improve access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources for sustainable development, taking into consideration the diversity of situations, national policies and specific needs of developing countries. It was also necessary to intensify research and development in support of energy for sustainable development, which required increased commitment by developed countries to deploy financial and human resources for accelerating research efforts. The developed countries should also take further action to mobilize financing, capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies

to developing countries, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

56. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, called for a balanced and integrated approach to the three pillars of sustainable development. The key goals of poverty alleviation and intergenerational well-being should command close attention at the Conference on Sustainable Development, during its preparatory process and throughout the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. All States, including the least developed countries, should be able to provide input to the preparatory process and at the Conference itself.

57. The efforts of the least developed countries, particularly the poorest among them, to achieve the objectives of sustainable development were hampered by internal constraints and the disproportionate impact on them of external shocks, including the recent crises and climate change. The sustainable development of the least developed countries depended on the sincere, full, effective and timely implementation of all relevant commitments and plans of action. The sustainable development agenda should accord special priority to issues such as energy, water, sustainable agriculture, forests, food security, biodiversity, the marine environment and human and social development. The least developed countries required enhanced support if they were to make progress in those areas.

58. The 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development should call for the provision of new, additional, stable and predictable financing to the least developed countries and the implementation of all commitments regarding official development assistance made at international conferences, including the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. The Conference on Sustainable Development should fully integrate the Istanbul Programme of Action into its outcome document.

59. It was also important to provide coordinated support and cooperation to the least developed countries in the areas of debt relief, market access, technology transfer, capacity-building, investment, climate finance and trade. The least developed countries called for an early, balanced, ambitious and development-oriented outcome of the Doha Development Round and, pending that outcome, agreement at the eighth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference on an "early harvest" package for those countries.

60. Multiple adverse impacts of climate change threatened to reverse some of the development gains which the least developed countries had achieved. In that connection, he emphasized the urgent need for a legally binding successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. The sustainable development agenda should call for increased resources for adaptation and mitigation assistance for the least developed countries and their inclusion in the clean development mechanism. He also called for the establishment and full operationalization of the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund and equity and inclusiveness with respect to its governance and disbursements. Enhanced global commitment was needed to ensure a positive outcome at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2011.

61. The least developed countries were more vulnerable than others to the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought. He called for comprehensive support for the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, including assistance in mainstreaming desertification issues into development strategies. Biodiversity loss was another issue of concern to the least developed countries, which should be provided with increased, predictable, and timely financial support in order to deal with it.

62. Any process relating to the concept of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should take into account the special needs of countries such as the least developed countries. Furthermore, in view of the commitment made at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to enable half the number of least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation from the category, an institutional framework for sustainable development should call for strengthening the relevant entities within the United Nations system and provide enhanced support for the sustainable development of the least developed countries. Continued support for strengthened and effective voice and participation of least developed countries in relevant international forums should also be assured. Those countries also believed that a comprehensive approach that included all stakeholders

was a must for effective implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

63. Speaking as the representative of Nepal, a mountainous country, he said that mountain regions were among the most vulnerable to climate change and that, owing to low productivity and infrastructure limitations, their level of development generally was below that of other regions. Mountain regions contributed to water and ecosystem services downstream.

64. Nepal was home to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, which served the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. His country had also hosted important meetings on mountain development issues in 2010 and 2011, and was grateful to the Government of Switzerland for having organized the Lucerne World Mountain Conference held earlier in October. His country looked forward to the full integration of sustainable mountain development issues in the global sustainable development agenda as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report on the subject (A/66/294).

65. **Mr. Hart** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that all indicators of global sustainability pointed to the alarming state of the global environment. Climate change impacts were occurring much more quickly than previously forecast, as evidenced by the alarmingly higher rate of sea-level rise, which would eventually inundate some small island developing States and significantly alter life in others. If global emissions continued to rise at the current rate, it would be impossible to hold the rise in global mean temperatures below 2° C, let alone the safer 1.5° C advocated by over 100 developing countries.

66. Collective action was urgently needed to address the challenge of global sustainability. Despite their small size and inherent vulnerabilities CARICOM Member States had developed or were developing policies, strategies and plans as the basis for the transition to a greener, low-carbon economy while also addressing poverty eradication and sustainable development. The creation of a CARICOM Single Market and Economy, which would facilitate the movement of people, goods and service in the region, was well under way and the Association of Caribbean States worked to protect the Caribbean Sea, one of their most valuable resources.

67. A supportive international environment was crucial to the success of those undertakings. Financial and technological resources for the developing countries must be scaled up and international governance reforms were needed in order to ensure a greater voice for developing countries in decision-making, norm-setting and realigning the mandates of some institutions to reflect current realities. As preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development intensified, CARICOM called on all Member States to reject business as usual and incremental improvements and prepare to confront the complex challenges of global sustainability collectively and with a sense of urgency and heightened ambition.

68. CARICOM believed that the Conference outcome must, inter alia, recognize that small island developing States continued to be a special case for sustainable development and that, owing to their unique vulnerabilities, they faced unique and increasing challenges over and above those affecting other developing countries. Moreover, small island developing States did not have the capacity to cope with such issues and their efforts during the past two decades to achieve sustainable development had been undermined by an international environment that was unsupportive and insensitive to their needs.

69. The Conference outcome must also urge the international community to honour all commitments to small island developing States, including those contained in Agenda 21, the Barbados Programme of Action, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Mauritius Strategy. The international community should be urged to adopt and implement policies to address the special needs of small island developing States and adopt a more coherent, coordinated and collaborative approach in support of their sustainable development. The Conference should further agree to convene a third Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 2014 to review progress on the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

70. CARICOM was committed to working towards an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive outcome at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban later in 2011. CARICOM continued to be concerned by the absence of a sense of

urgency and ambition in some quarters, including calls by some countries to postpone a comprehensive response to the frightening threats of climate change.

71. He wished to highlight three of CARICOM's priorities for the Parties. First, the Conference must ensure the full operationalization of all institutional elements of the Cancun Agreements, including the Green Climate Fund; the Adaptation Committee; the 2013-2015 review of the long-term global goal of limiting warming to 2° C; and the mitigation package, including measuring, reporting and verification of the mitigation commitments and actions of developed and developing countries, respectively. The Green Climate Fund must be operationalized in Durban and CARICOM urged developed countries to begin making pledges for its start-up and initial capitalization so that its operationalization would be credible and its Board could begin work early in 2012.

72. Secondly, the Parties must strengthen the multilateral rule-based, legally binding climate change regime by agreeing to a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol with more ambitious mitigation targets than those currently on the table. Agreement should also be reached on the parameters and time frame for a new legally binding instrument under the Convention. The instrument should be comprehensive in scope, build on existing instruments such as the Kyoto Protocol and ensure the provision of financing and technology to guarantee a more secure future for the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

73. Thirdly, the Parties must address unresolved issues such as providing long-term finance to enable developing countries to undertake urgent adaptation and mitigation actions before the finalization of the new instrument.

Organization of work

74. **Mr. Herczyński** (Poland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he strongly believed that the meeting should be suspended so that urgent informal consultations which had begun earlier could continue.

75. **Mr. Hart** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) noted that more than 60 Member States were inscribed on the list of speakers and the Committee still had 15 minutes to hear further statements. Informal consultations could continue during the lunch hour.

76. **Mr. Herczyński** (Poland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he had asked for a suspension because he had noticed that the list of speakers was no longer posted. Before the meeting continued he wished to understand why the list had been removed.

77. **Mr. Hart** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that perhaps the Chair could read out the next few names on the list of speakers, to avoid losing the 15 minutes that were left.

78. **The Chair** said that the Bureau had discussed the order of speakers after objections had been raised by the representatives of Indonesia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Group of Small Island Developing States. The Bureau had then decided on the order of speakers for the rest of the day. It was purely an ad hoc arrangement and would apply only that day.

79. The representatives who would address the Committee next were, in the following order: the representative of Nauru, on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States; the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; the European Union; the representative of Australia, on behalf of CANZ, by special arrangement; and the representative of Qatar, who had asked to switch from the afternoon list to the morning list. He pointed out that only 10 minutes now remained for statements at the current meeting.

80. **Mr. Hart** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the Ambassadors of Nauru and Indonesia, who had been waiting all morning to address the Committee, should be allowed to speak at the current meeting. Informal consultations could be held during the lunch break.

81. **Mr. Herczyński** (Poland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, reiterated his preference to continue the debate in the afternoon. The issue to be discussed in informal consultations required prompt attention. In addition, an important meeting with the President of the General Assembly would begin very soon.

82. **The Chair** pointed out that under Rule 118 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure, motions to suspend or adjourn the meeting could not be debated. If a formal motion was made to do so, it must be immediately put to the vote. He needed to know

whether the representative of Poland was making a formal motion.

83. **Mr. Hart** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that it would be inappropriate to suspend the debate on an issue of global significance because of concerns regarding the placement of a delegation on the list of speakers. Two or three of the speakers on the list the Chair had read out could be given the floor before the meeting ended. The consultations could follow during the lunch hour. He was simply asking the representative of Poland on behalf of the European Community to reconsider his position. He would have to consult with CARICOM Member States on the issue.

84. **The Chair** reminded delegations that he could not allow a debate on the matter.

85. **Mr. Rangel** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that he agreed that the debate should not be interrupted because a delegation objected to its location on the list of speakers. Other committees were having similar discussions. He urged the representative of Poland to be flexible and agree to speak after the country groups had addressed the Committee.

86. **Mr. Torrington** (Guyana) said that he agreed with the representatives of Barbados and Venezuela. The matter raised by the representative of Poland had been under discussion for some time and its consideration did not warrant suspension of the meeting.

87. **Mr. Silberberg** (Germany) said that he agreed with the representative of Poland that prompt further discussion of the matter was appropriate.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Chair: Mr. Donckel (Vice-Chair) .... (Luxembourg)

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(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind (*continued*)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-sixth session (*continued*)

(h) Harmony with Nature (*continued*)

(i) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*)

(j) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Donckel (Luxembourg), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/66/87, A/66/297, A/66/298, A/66/298/Corr.1, A/66/337, A/66/388 and A/66/391)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/66/287, A/66/304 and A/C.2/66/2)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/66/218 and A/66/278)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/66/301)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind (*continued*) (A/66/291)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/66/291)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/66/291)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-sixth session (*continued*) (A/66/25)

(h) Harmony with Nature (*continued*) (A/66/302)

(i) Sustainable mountain development (*continued*) (A/66/294)

(j) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/66/306)

1. **The Chair**, referring to the discussion that had taken place at the preceding meeting concerning the list of speakers for agenda item 19, said that he had conducted consultations with all major groups and would follow the advice given by the President of the General Assembly: as an interim solution in no way setting a precedent, he would follow the order of speakers as established in the morning, namely, Nauru (on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States), Indonesia (on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Qatar (on behalf of the Arab States), the European Union, and Australia (speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand). The rest of the list would remain unchanged. He thanked the major groups for their flexibility and constructive spirit in seeking a solution to the issue.

2. **Ms. Moses** (Nauru), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States represented at the United Nations — Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Nauru — said that the vulnerability of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) to economic, social and environmental challenges and their lack of capacity to respond to them were major obstacles to the sustainable development of the region, which depended on the health and vitality of the marine environment. For the Pacific SIDS, the "green economy" was in fact a "blue economy". Marine and ocean resources were the basis of the region's livelihoods, food security and economy, and their conservation and sustainable management represented a primary pathway to future sustainable development. Accordingly, the Pacific SIDS, along with Australia, New Zealand, the United Nations Secretary-General and others, had called for inclusion of the blue economy in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, with three priority concerns, namely, enabling the development aspirations of SIDS in relation to the utilization of marine and coastal resources, eliminating overfishing and destructive fishing practices, and increasing the resilience of marine ecosystems to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification. With regard to the sustainable development of SIDS, the Secretary-General's report provided concrete recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation. New, targeted measures to address the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS were clearly required and Nauru would welcome a substantive discussion on those important issues the following year. In addition, the Pacific SIDS, along with the Alliance of Small Island States, were calling for the third convening of a global conference on

sustainable development of SIDS to be agreed upon at the upcoming Rio+20 conference.

3. Nauru's region was heavily dependent on the health of coral reef ecosystems, which were a primary source of food and income. Over 275 million people worldwide, mostly in developing countries and island nations, depended directly on coral reefs for their livelihoods and sustenance. Coral reefs were under increasing stress and by 2030, absent urgent protective measures, 90 per cent would be threatened by the combined impacts of climate change, acidification and other human impacts. Adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on the protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development would be an important tool for sustainable development and poverty eradication in the SIDS.

4. In relation to protection of the global climate for present and future generations, climate change remained the single greatest threat to the survival and the viability of the Pacific SIDS and their efforts to achieve sustainable development goals. The adverse impacts of climate change were already being felt. Every day, people in the Pacific feared that rising seas would wash into their homes and take away their land forever. They welcomed the Secretary-General's historic visit to the Pacific region to see first-hand the full extent of Pacific people's vulnerability to climate change. Yet, they were acutely aware of the continuing gap between ambitious pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the actual amount required according to science to avoid disaster.

5. As the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban approached, the Pacific SIDS were concerned by recent developments both in the work of the Transitional Committee and in pre-conference deliberations, which appeared to signal that a small handful of countries were attempting to undermine the Durban outcome. There was reason to fear that the fragile trust restored in Cancun was being endangered by lack of political will to reach an outcome that would ensure the survival of all nations.

6. The Pacific SIDS were not prepared to be part of an outcome under the UNFCCC that treated them as collateral damage. Their priorities for Durban included agreeing to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, agreeing to a clear and unambiguous mandate for the conclusion of a legally binding instrument to address emissions for all nations under the Convention, clarity on raising the level of mitigation ambition in accordance with science to ensure the survival of all nations, and operationalization of the Green Climate Fund to ensure adequate provision of finance for urgent and long-term adaptation imperatives.

7. For people in the Pacific SIDS, the impact of climate change might ultimately render many of their countries uninhabitable, destroying unique and ancient cultures in the process. Clearly, the survival of States, their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the impact on their neighbours were matters of international peace and security. Security was a basic precondition for sustainable development. The United Nations therefore could not neglect to address the security implications of climate change. The Pacific SIDS had been encouraged by the adoption of a Presidential Statement on the issue by the Security Council in July and reiterated their call for the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative to analyse projected security impacts of climate change. It was also necessary to assess the capacity of the United Nations system in order to ensure that it was able to respond to the security implications of climate change.

8. Renewable energy had a key role to play in solving the climate crisis and providing energy security, and, although they bore almost no responsibility for the onset of climate change, the Pacific SIDS had adopted strategies and targets to promote renewable energy. However, the implementation cost of switching to renewable sources of energy was a major barrier. The unique challenges and opportunities of small islands were being ignored by conventional investors, who tended to favour large, centralized projects. Smaller distributed renewable energy systems were more cost-effective than large, centralized generators when the population was scattered over a wide area and across multiple islands. The Pacific SIDS therefore called for special assistance from the international community and financial institutions in the area of renewable energy supply for renewable and affordable alternative clean energy sources.

9. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the convening of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

was very timely, as it would provide a platform for reviewing developments since the 1992 Earth Summit and for addressing the gaps in implementing Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

10. Bearing in mind the lessons learned from the first Earth Summit, the upcoming Conference must promote sustained, equitable and inclusive global economic growth, especially in the developing countries; find an immediate and sustainable solution to the environmental problems; translate resolutions, declarations and plans into concrete implementable actions; and improve the current sustainable development institutional framework in order to promote the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development.

11. Climate change negotiations had entered a critical phase and the future direction of the climate change regime hinged on the decisions to be taken at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention. Preparatory work had been done for the Conference of the Parties and should help to ensure a balanced, comprehensive and meaningful outcome. Developed countries should make more ambitious commitments and set specific and binding targets on greenhouse gas emissions. The outcome of the Conference must recognize developing countries' disadvantages and their need to adapt to climate change, and lead to adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources, transfer of technology, capacity enhancement and adaptation and mitigation efforts.

12. The adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) was a landmark in the pursuit of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The ABS regime would help developing countries to promote sustainable use of biodiversity and prevent further loss. Considering the strategic role of biodiversity in sustainable development, ASEAN hoped that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would also strengthen the conservation and protection agenda for biodiversity.

13. Developing countries continued to depend on fossil fuels to support their development efforts and the use of alternative energy sources remained low. There was a need therefore for a common resolve to develop viable sources of renewable energy, for which research and development must be intensified and the necessary financial and human resources assembled. Smart energy management must be advanced to allow for more efficient energy use.

14. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development must initiate concrete action to improve the existing sustainable development framework. The time had come to move beyond words and resolutions to ensure the future of the planet and its people.

15. **Mr. Al-Hamadi** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development were complementary and deserved equal attention. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) to be held in June 2012 should review the progress made, determine ways to help developing countries to achieve sustainable development, reaffirm political support for that process, and address current and potential challenges. It was therefore a matter of concern that developed countries had, in recent negotiations, sought to evade their agreed commitments. Moreover, the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation referred to the need to take further effective measures to remove obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular peoples living under foreign occupation. However, Israel's occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan, Shaba'a Farms, the Kafr Shuba hills and the northern part of the village of Ghajar in Lebanon prevented the inhabitants of those areas from achieving sustainable development.

16. Climate change was expected to have a negative impact on development in the Arab region, particularly with regard to agriculture, vegetation and biodiversity, with potential repercussions for food security and vital economic investments, not to mention the social consequences of migration. In order to confront those effects, the international community should show solidarity and take effective action based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, focusing on assistance to developing countries, particularly least developed countries, and reaffirming the historic responsibility of developed countries. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change remained the principal and appropriate context for multilateral negotiations in that regard. Through comprehensive, transparent and consensus-based negotiations, the seventeenth session of the Conference

of the Parties to the Framework Convention in Durban should endeavour to secure support for an equitable international approach to climate change based on the Kyoto Protocol and long-term cooperative action under the Convention. Developed countries should take a leading role, notably through technology transfer and capacity-building.

17. Agriculture and biodiversity in the Arab region were also endangered by desertification, which should be addressed through comprehensive international efforts, awareness-raising, national capacity-building and technology transfer programmes. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification should be strengthened by providing resources for relevant projects.

18. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Nagoya in 2010 had underscored the importance of biodiversity. The right of developing countries to benefit from their natural resources should be defended, and incentives should be made available for the preservation of biodiversity. The Group emphasized that every State had full sovereignty over the genetic resources, knowledge and traditional practices in its territory.

19. The Group took note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/66/297). The Committee should give due attention to the topic and highlight Israel's disregard for General Assembly resolutions requesting it to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Governments of Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic for the effects of the oil slick, which had been caused by a barbaric Israeli strike on the Jiyeh power plant.

20. **Mr. Zampetti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro; stabilization and association process countries Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and in addition Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, said that the European Union and its Member States had provided their inputs for the outcome document for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which should strengthen coherence and enhance the linkages between the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

21. The two conference themes — green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development — offered a unique opportunity to address current challenges with a view to reshaping the future. However, success would require imagination, boldness, political commitment and creativity.

22. In order to give fresh impetus to sustainable development, the Conference would need to agree on a shared vision of change, able to deliver results within agreed time frames. Its main operational outcomes should include a green economy road map with specific goals, objectives and actions at the international level, as well as a package of reforms, including upgrading the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the status of a specialized agency for the environment, leading to strengthened international environmental governance as part of a more balanced and effective international framework for sustainable development. Governance aspects of the economic and social pillars of sustainable development must also be taken into account, while also seeking better linkages between the three pillars and improved implementation of existing commitments.

23. Reinforcing the architecture for sustainable development governance at the global level would require, in particular, the strengthening of and better coordination between the relevant United Nations organizations. That would also require reinforcing and mainstreaming environmental issues in a balanced manner, without neglecting social issues. Contributing to the preparations for Rio, a conference to be held in Bonn on the following month would address the interconnections between water, energy and food security in order to develop integrated solutions.

24. Success at the Rio Conference would require building partnerships, focusing on the implementation of sustainable development in the field, and making the means of implementation available. Beyond traditional development assistance, there was a need for innovative sources of finance, taking stock of the results of the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Busan. The private sector, which stood to benefit from the opportunities of the

green economy, would need to play its part and developments in the global economy over the previous two decades suggested that all development partners, including new and emerging ones, would need to do their fair share.

25. Climate change was a global threat requiring a global response. The Cancun Agreements had been significant; the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on climate change in Durban must be another step forward. The commitments undertaken by countries so far with respect to national emissions targets and mitigation measures represented an important step towards achieving the 2-degree objective, but further efforts were still needed.

26. The Durban conference must provide a clear road map and timeline towards a new comprehensive, robust and legally binding framework. The European Union was open to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol as part of the transition to such a framework. In addition, the Conference should operationalize the Cancun Agreements, including those on measurement, reporting and verification (MRV), provide an effective design for the Green Climate Fund and address remaining key issues.

27. Pursuant to its commitments under the Copenhagen Accord, the European Union had mobilized €2.34 billion in Fast-Start Finance for developing countries in 2010 and was well on track to meet its €7.2 billion pledge for 2010-2012. That should ensure maximum transparency and timely reporting on Fast-Start funding.

28. The European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to establish the High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All, and hoped that the Rio conference would build on that initiative. The European Union continued to support the international community's efforts to promote renewable energy in developing countries. In that regard the Africa-European Union Energy Partnership had set concrete, ambitious targets for energy access and renewable energy.

29. International biodiversity policy would also remain very much at the centre of thinking in the coming year, especially in the run-up to the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Hyderabad.

30. The European Union had already made good progress towards achieving many of the Aichi targets, in particular through its new biodiversity strategy. That strategy was in line with global commitments made in Nagoya in October 2011 and should guide the European Union towards its own ambitious target of halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020 and restoring them as far as feasible. In particular, the European Union was strongly committed to the ratification process and full implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. Indeed, most members of the European Union signed the protocol and implementation work had already begun. The European Union supported developing countries in implementing the Aichi-Nagoya outcomes and the Nagoya ABS Protocol, as conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services were crucial for poverty eradication.

31. Important progress had been made towards setting up the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) at the first session of the plenary in Nairobi. IPBES was a key priority on the global agenda and the European Union was committed to its full operationalization.

32. The recent Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) had taken important decisions strengthening the implementation of the Ten-Year Strategy for 2008-2018, and providing a concerted approach to effectively meet the challenges of desertification and land degradation. Enhanced scientific support was needed in order for UNCCD to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge on desertification and land degradation. In that regard, the European Union actively supported the initiative on the economics of land degradation as a means of developing a clearer understanding of the full costs of land degradation.

33. The third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in May 2011, was a major milestone in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the members of the European Union had developed and were implementing strategies on disaster risk reduction and prevention, and on building disaster resilience, both inside and outside the European Union.

34. **Mr. Thomson** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development approached, it had become clear that many of the challenges facing humanity required global solutions. The Conference would be a crucial and timely opportunity to find ways to set the world on a more sustainable course and to decide on practical outcomes that integrated the three pillars of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental. The international community must focus its energies on developing practical initiatives supported by a strong and flexible institutional framework to respond to new and emerging challenges, implement existing commitments and promote research, innovation and cooperation. The Conference must also overcome the divides between developed and developing countries and deliver initiatives which empowered the most vulnerable to participate in the solutions. Developed and developing countries alike must cooperate in order to achieve global sustainable development. Canada, Australia and New Zealand looked forward to continuing participation in the preparations for the conference. While the Second Committee had important work ahead of it, it was important to avoid prejudging the outcomes of the dedicated Rio preparatory process — a process that the Committee itself had set in motion.

35. It was essential to recognize marine and coral reef conservation and management as an urgent sustainable development priority. Hundreds of millions of people relied on the marine and coastal environment for food, livelihoods, ecosystem services, recreation and economic opportunities. But the oceans were increasingly under pressure from threats such as climate change, acidification, overfishing, biodiversity loss, habitat loss and pollution. Key ecosystems might soon reach critical thresholds, disproportionately impacting people and communities that were most vulnerable, such as small island and coastal developing countries. The Secretary-General's report on coral reefs (A/66/298) contained forecasts of dire consequences if no protective action was taken.

36. Pacific island States were putting forward the "blue economy" as a focus for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Canada, Australia and New Zealand supported a "blue economy" approach which recognized that marine resources and ecosystems were a foundation for sustainable development for many countries, particularly small island developing States. Pacific Ocean countries supported the need for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to recognize the importance of practical actions to improve conservation and management of marine resources and ecosystems. That would be a contribution to food security, livelihoods, economic opportunity, conservation, climate change resilience and natural disaster mitigation.

37. The upcoming conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban was an opportunity to take concrete steps to implement the Cancun Agreements. A new global climate regime must include legally binding mitigation commitments by all major economies. Fast-start financing pledges were already flowing to provide much-needed mitigation and adaptation support to developing countries.

38. Australia, Canada and New Zealand were firmly committed to reducing their carbon monoxide emissions, recognizing that the world's prosperity depended on global progress towards a more sustainable future.

39. **Mr. Alimov** (Russian Federation) said that his country was participating actively in efforts to implement Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the 2002 Earth Summit and 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. It was essential to provide guidance for the Preparatory Committee for the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro so as to enable the Committee to develop a balanced approach to the priority items on the agenda, including the transition to a green economy, taking into account the real possibilities of achieving sustainable development in the long term. The General Assembly's decisions should endorse the preparations made so far and encourage all to cooperate in making Rio+20 a success.

40. The failure of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2011 to agree on a package of policy recommendations on the issues included in its current two-year cycle was a matter of concern. The problem lay not in the Commission's structure and procedures but in the lack of willingness on the part of members to reach compromise solutions.

41. His delegation welcomed the results achieved at the eleventh special session of the UNEP Governing

Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. UNEP continued to play a key role in addressing contemporary environmental problems and its potential contribution was far from being fully realized. That fact should be kept in mind in discussions about reform of United Nations activities in the field of environmental protection.

42. The successful outcome of the ninth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests underscored the importance of the Forum as the leading player in promoting and coordinating international cooperation on forests. The documents adopted at that session setting forth guidelines and priorities for international cooperation in sustainable forest management were important inputs for Rio+20.

43. The Russian Federation was prepared to work actively towards an agreement on an international regime for cooperation on climate for the period beyond 2012 on the basis of the outcome of the Cancun meeting of the States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention's targets for reduction of greenhouse gases could be met only if all countries did their part, taking into account their real capacities and their level of responsibility for climate change. Measures to counter climate change should be seen as part of a broader effort to promote the transition to a green economy, which would require a shift towards greater energy efficiency and reductions in resource consumption.

44. The recent High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Desertification had served to underscore the importance of the Convention to Combat Desertification as one of the central environmental conventions and an important tool for achieving global targets for social and economic development and poverty reduction. The Convention should be strengthened by encouraging universal accession to it and by building up the regional component of cooperation under the Convention.

45. International cooperation in preventing and mitigating emergencies caused by natural disasters was of the utmost importance. Further efforts were needed to improve coordination of collective responses, make modern technologies for dealing with natural and man-made disasters widely available and develop mechanisms for the use of such technologies for the benefit of humankind as a whole.

46. His delegation urged speedy action to achieve the targets set out in the concluding documents of the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. In that connection, it welcomed the results of the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and was prepared to work in the period ahead for the strengthening of the Global Platform.

47. **Ms. Wu** Ye-Min (Singapore) said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development must serve to identify the gaps in the sustainable development infrastructure, address why they existed and determine how they could be effectively tackled. An example of such a gap was the lack of political will to strengthen UNEP and provide it with the support it needed to fulfil its mandate.

48. The Conference should also study the initiatives and measures that had and had not worked in order to continue to build on successes and avoid repeating mistakes. It might seek answers to the question why the Commission on Sustainable Development had been able to attract high-level representation when it was first established but not in recent years, and why it had failed to reach an outcome twice in its previous three cycles.

49. A third area for reflection was the work of the Second Committee in promoting sustainable development. It was doubtful whether negotiating multiple sustainable development resolutions every year, including on issues where the primary forum was clearly not the General Assembly, helped to move the sustainable development agenda forward. The sheer number of such resolutions, made it difficult to ensure coherence, let alone adopt a holistic approach to implement sustainable development.

50. It was only by looking at the hard questions that real answers to problems of sustainable development would be found. Creating new structures and bodies could work only if Member States understood where they had gone wrong with the existing framework. Otherwise, the answers would be placebos that would not improve the current system and could even further burden it.

51. Further, coordination at the national level was key to greater coherence and coordination in the sustainable development framework. It was futile for the United Nations to call for greater coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions if Member States' own

representatives in those institutions were not calling for such coordination with the United Nations.

52. There was likewise a need to go beyond the usual negotiating rituals and rediscover the spirit of Rio in 1992. Nations must seize the moment and bring together Governments, citizens and businesses to implement Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Sustainable development needed to be integrated into the lifestyles of the twenty-first century.

53. Sustainable development must be pursued at all levels, including at the United Nations. In that regard, a proper paper recycling system and more options for non-plastic food and drink containers were needed.

54. **Mr. Jimenez** (Nicaragua) said that the world was going through a crisis that threatened the future of humanity and Mother Earth. The crisis had been created by a selfish and irresponsible model of unbridled growth and consumption and unsustainable production. As citizens of the world and custodians of the same common house, all should shoulder the responsibility of saving mankind by urgently embracing a sustainable way of life that would preserve the world for present and future generations.

55. For Nicaragua, sustainable development meant access for all to water, sustainable management of forests, food security and sovereignty, universal access to education, health and peace. Nicaragua's commitment to promoting sustainable development was focused on the human person. Direct citizen participation and social equity were necessary conditions of such development. Nicaragua had consolidated the process of reconciliation and national unity and was pursuing responsible sustainable development of its natural resources for the benefit of all Nicaraguans.

56. The Government's economic strategy stressed increased production and social progress and had enabled the country to achieve the highest GDP growth in Central America and to score successes in combating illiteracy and malnutrition. Thanks to Nicaragua's participation in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), invaluable economic and social programmes were being carried out for the benefit of the poorest segments of the population.

57. Nicaragua's achievements were, however, threatened by the impact of climate change. Central America was highly vulnerable to the adverse climate trends, as could be seen in the recent flooding that had caused significant loss of life and damaged or destroyed infrastructure. Nicaragua was grateful for the help provided by the Palestinian Community in Nicaragua, Cuba, Canada, Brazil, Spain, Iran, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico and Taiwan, as well as the World Food Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and the unwavering solidarity of ALBA. That spirit of solidarity and cooperation should prevail at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development so that mankind could take a giant step into a future of peace and well-being in harmony with Mother Nature.

58. **Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia) said that, although progress towards sustainable development had been made on many fronts since the first Earth Summit in 1992, the pace of such progress had been slow, while the rate of environmental degradation had increased despite the international community's efforts to reverse that trend.

59. Malaysia had recently proposed that the creation of a World Environment Organization (WEO) be discussed at the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in hopes that such a body could address the weaknesses and challenges of the institutional framework for sustainable development. The proposed new specialized agency should not act as regulatory body, but rather should work within the agreed Rio principles. It should be a consultative and facilitative body, helping countries meet international commitments derived from mutual arrangements, including through on-the-ground implementation support to developing countries. The new specialized agency should also be given a mandate to promote synergies of existing multilateral environment agreements and establishment of new treaties, and it should be equipped with more stable and secure financing for the environment.

60. Malaysia was also of the view that the other two pillars of sustainable development, namely the economic and social, should be strengthened and that the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, including their institutional requirements, should be further enhanced.

61. Since 2009 Malaysia had been working to build greater public awareness of green technologies. In 2009, it had introduced a "Green Technology Policy" to promote technology that would be less harmful to the environment and had established a Ministry of Water, Energy and Green Technology reflecting its readiness to pursue sustainable development through the use of new and environmentally friendly technology.

62. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would be a unique opportunity for the international community to lay the foundation for the attainment of sustainable development and to forge the strong political will needed to enable Member States to move forward and fulfil their commitments.

63. **Ms. Webber** (United States of America) said that as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development approached, some aspects of the conference modalities would be decided in the draft resolution that the Second Committee would adopt on implementation of Agenda 21. The draft resolution should provide for a practical, inclusive structure for the Conference that encouraged meaningful dialogue leading to action. The United States wished to work towards a constructive and action-oriented outcome that made a difference at the national level. The result of the Conference should be a short, focused political document that was positive about the opportunities for the future and realistic about common challenges. Care should be taken to avoid the temptation to make the Conference all things to all people by increasing the number of items to be addressed.

64. It was also important to be mindful of other international processes that were addressing related issues, including climate change, desertification, biodiversity, energy and water issues. The integrity of the Second Committee should be upheld by focusing on substantive issues and meaningful outcomes within existing agenda items. Efforts in 2011 should focus on the conversations, meetings, dialogues, and preparations taking place around the globe, both Government- and stakeholder-driven, so as to ensure the success of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

65. All over the world, people faced serious risks because of global climate change. No single nation could address that challenge alone, and countries around the world needed to reduce their emissions and work to adapt to the changing climate. The United States had always maintained that global problems required global solutions. Through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community had made unprecedented progress over the previous three years to address climate change.

66. The United States supported the outcomes from Copenhagen and Cancun. An approach reflecting specific undertakings by all of the major economies went beyond the outdated notion that only developed countries undertook specific actions to reduce their emissions. At the seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention in Durban the world should build on the progress made over the previous two years by taking new decisions to advance the balanced package of the Cancun Agreements towards an effective global response to the climate change challenge.

67. The United States viewed the pursuit of new and renewable sources of energy as a domestic and foreign policy priority and placed great value on international cooperation. Innovative technologies and initiatives, ranging from energy efficiency to renewable energy and cleaner fossil fuels, were all necessary pieces of a balanced portfolio of energy options. The United States welcomed efforts to share best practices and identify a range of solutions to encourage increased adoption of renewable energy technologies.

68. Investment in research and development for all major renewable energy technologies was needed to encourage innovation, reduce costs, and expand the reach of new ideas. Creating an enabling environment with those aims was vital, and the work of bilateral and multilateral renewable energy initiatives, such as the new International Renewable Energy Agency, as well as that of the various United Nations bodies was essential.

69. The United States was delighted to see strong interest in the General Assembly's high-level event on desertification. The humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa had brought home to the world the compounding effects of desertification. At the recent session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Changwon, Republic of Korea, nations had strengthened regional cooperation on desertification, resolved a long-standing issue related to arrangements

for the Global Mechanism and continued to enhance the role of science related to dryland issues. The United States would continue to support the resolution and to defend the scope of the Convention.

70. Given the trend towards rapid urbanization, especially in the developing world, sustainable and inclusive cities were needed, but it was also important to address both the opportunities and the challenges of urbanization in development strategies. To that end, the United States was working to ensure that UN-Habitat and other important actors were well prepared to help Governments and their citizens to take their next steps creatively, responsibly and efficiently.

71. UNEP played an important role in global environmental matters and provided an extremely valuable forum for discussing the issues. UNEP had made progress in a number of areas, including strengthening its science function, cooperation within the United Nations system, and its emphasis on capacity-building. In addition, the UNEP dialogue on environmental governance would be important to consideration of the Conference theme of "the institutional framework for sustainable development". At the Conference, the United States would seek a strengthened role for UNEP with a view to achieving a more integrated and balanced approach to the three pillars of sustainable development within the United Nations system. The Second Committee should not prejudge the outcome of those discussions. Member States had a common priority for UNEP: enhancing its ability to support and encourage national efforts to safeguard the global environment as a contribution to the pursuit of sustainable development.

72. **Ms. Volken** (Switzerland) said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would bring sustainability issues back to the top of the international agenda. At the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the international community had already sketched out a development path taking into account the social, economic and environmental dimensions. There had been progress in striving for sustainable development, but important gaps remained and development overall was still far from sustainable; too many were left out and the world's resources were reaching their limits. Therefore, the upcoming Conference was a timely opportunity for nations to renew their commitment to sustainable development. The thematic agenda should help to focus discussions and to lay the groundwork for a meaningful outcome. The Second Committee had a contribution to make to the Rio process and the conference outcome.

73. With regard to Agenda 21, it was of great importance to capitalize on the work undertaken and the experience gained in the Marrakech Process, as well as on the expertise of UNEP and other United Nations entities in sustainable consumption and production. Achieving sustainable consumption and production would drive the transition to a green and sustainable economy. There was therefore a need to build on the valuable work that had already been done in order to get a practical outcome on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication at the Rio Conference.

74. With regard to UNEP, the Nairobi-Helsinki outcome on strengthening international environmental governance was vital for the discussions on strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the Rio Conference, which should result in ambitious and concrete reform measures.

75. The resolution that the Committee would adopt on biodiversity should note the holding of the first part of the plenary meeting on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in Nairobi and the significant progress made. Consensus on the establishment of the platform could be reached during the second meeting. The plenary's call for offers from potential host institutions was a sensible approach to create the basis for an open and inclusive platform.

76. Incorporating lessons learned from disaster risk management in policymaking could contribute to sustainable development. The UNEP Governing Council had decided to strengthen awareness of the environmental dimensions of natural and man-made disasters and had called for closer cooperation between UNEP and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and other actors.

77. **Ms. Mesquita Pessôa** (Brazil) said that the world was at a crossroads. In the preceding 20 or so years, the primary-products economy had become decoupled from the industrial economy. In the industrial economy itself, production had become decoupled from employment. Capital movements rather than trade had become the driving force of the world economy and unregulated private capital flows had made

macroeconomic stabilization much more challenging. In short, the world had become increasingly integrated, leaving little room for countries to jump-start their development in relative isolation.

78. Global food, energy and financial crises had exposed the systemic flaws in the functioning of deregulated global markets and required Governments to step in to address those crises. As noted in the 2010 World Economic and Social Survey, future prosperity would require major reforms in global economic governance and new thinking about global economic development, focusing on sustainable development. With world population having just reached 7 billion, nations could choose to repeat neo-Malthusian arguments or to recognize the need for solidarity, equity and sustainable patterns of production and consumption, with the developed countries taking the lead.

79. As host country of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Brazil was convinced that multilateralism was the best way to engage the international community in the search for solutions to the great challenges it faced globally. The Conference constituted a unique opportunity for countries to set the sustainable development agenda for the next 20 years. It should give the highest priority to poverty eradication. Countries should remain open to the new opportunities that might arise in an inclusive green economy that responded to national priorities and specific circumstances of each country and that might create jobs and build resilience in the conservation of natural resources, thus laying solid foundations for intra- and inter-generational equity. The institutional framework for sustainable development should favour practical and effective solutions and foster accountability in the pursuit of sustainable development at various levels, while enhancing the reach and capacity of the United Nations system to support implementation on the ground.

80. **Mr. Hashim** (Saudi Arabia) said that all Member States should promote sustainable development in compliance with the Rio principles, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. They should work together to implement Agenda 21, including through the provision of adequate financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, in accordance with the relevant international commitments. Climate change was inextricably linked to sustainable development and required a comprehensive approach. It was therefore the responsibility of the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary organs, including the Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme. Any involvement on the part of the Security Council would go beyond its mandate and could jeopardize consensus.

81. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the appropriate forum for tackling the issue. Developed States should take prompt action to comply with their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, and States that had not yet ratified the Protocol should do so without delay. And agreement was needed in order to extend those commitments.

82. In order to realize Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), effective programmes should be developed in order to manage biodiversity for the benefit of the poorest. Saudi Arabia had announced a donation of $300 million for a fund to research energy resources, the environment and climate change. The Saudi Development Fund had pledged $500 million in preferential loans for projects assisting developing countries and least developed countries to gain access to energy. A further $500 million was being donated to the World Food Programme.

83. **Mr. Abedelaziz** (Egypt) said that in spite of some positive signs, the world economy remained in an uncertain state, marked by unemployment, trade barriers, and high external debt in many developing countries. Moreover, climate change was having catastrophic effects on food production and prices triggering a devastating food crisis in East Africa and beyond. Multilateral action was required if a more resilient world economy based on sustainable development was to come into being. A more integrated approach incorporating the economic, environmental and social aspects was needed so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

84. His delegation hoped that the upcoming Conference on Sustainable Development give renewed impetus to sustainable development for the next 20 years and beyond, through the preparation of an international, long-term, action-oriented agenda that would include the establishment of clear mechanisms for follow-up and evaluation of the implementation of the commitments made at all previous United Nations conferences on economic matters and any new commitments made at the Rio+20 Conference.

85. The reluctance of developed countries to fulfil their commitments in the economic, social and environmental fields and their attempts to renegotiate commitments agreed by consensus were cause for concern. Much stronger political will was needed to ensure that sustainable development was achieved on the basis of past and new agreed principles and objectives.

86. States had failed to act collectively in a responsible and integrated manner to the challenges of climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the primary intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. Agreement must be reached on a just international system dealing with climate change on the basis of the Kyoto Protocol and the long-term cooperative action mechanism. Concrete measures were needed to ensure the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. Energy production was also a great priority; the United Nations needed to move urgently towards shaping a comprehensive energy agenda that included the creation of an effective mechanism for the transfer of advanced energy technologies, particularly in the field of new and renewable energy.

87. Agriculture was becoming increasingly vulnerable to climate change, exacerbating land degradation and contributing to water scarcity. The importance of investing in agriculture, especially sustainable agriculture, was paramount as current technology and practices could not increase food production sufficiently to feed 7 billion without worsening greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution and land degradation. Proper management of water resources was essential to social and economic development, poverty reduction, equity and sustainable environment.

88. Addressing land degradation, drought and desertification should be a priority in dealing with several global policy challenges. Desertification had its greatest impact in Africa, which was afflicted by frequent and severe droughts. Recently, the Horn of Africa had been hit by the worst drought cycle in 60 years. The United Nations had officially declared famine in the region. Desertification must be a high priority issue at the Rio+20 Conference, on an equal footing with climate change, biodiversity, food security, energy, water and other challenges of a global nature that required concerted global action.

89. Only an integrated approach to sustainable development, incorporating its economic, social, and environmental dimensions, would ensure progress in addressing the multiple and interrelated crises and challenges the world faced. That perspective should be reflected in the Second Committee's discussion of the agenda item on sustainable development, by, for example, revisiting the structure of the agenda item so that it was not restricted to environmental issues and incorporated economic and social issues related to the achievement of sustainable development.

90. **Mr. Laguna** (Mexico) said that it was important to secure significant results on the two central themes to be discussed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. That objective, however, could not be attained if financial contributions for the Conference were insufficient to ensure the full and proactive participation of countries in the preparatory consultations and in the Conference itself.

91. The transition to sustainable development required robust and efficient international machinery. Mexico therefore attached great importance to strengthening the existing United Nations institutional machinery for managing sustainable development and environmental protection, in the light of lessons learned, including the experience of the Commission for Sustainable Development. Mexico believed that Rio+20 should adopt decisions on the four main aspects of that institutional framework: first, integration of the three pillars and definition of an agenda for sustainability; second, strengthening coordination between United Nations agencies so as to discontinue separate discussion of development and sustainable development, treating all development as sustainable; third, fostering vertical integration of each of the three pillars, economic, social and environmental; and fourth, ensuring fulfilment of commitments assumed and those to be assumed at the Conference.

92. With regard to climate change, the Cancun Agreements would not bear fruit unless they were made fully operational at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban. The Conference of the Parties should turn the institutions created in Cancun into a reality in order to maximize cooperation for development and combating climate change. It was hoped that the Durban conference would agree on a transition period

from the Kyoto Protocol and a strengthened regime for climate change consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities.

93. Incorporating resiliency in all dimensions and levels of sustainable development was a priority for Mexico. Mexico supported the work of the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the results of the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

94. With regard to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Mexico recognized the progress achieved at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on desertification, which had focused the attention of the international community on a comprehensive and shared approach to the three Rio conventions.

95. The twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme had concluded with the adoption of important decisions on the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; on Global Environmental Governance; Financing Options for Chemicals and Wastes; and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, all of which were relevant to sustainable development.

96. The capacity of UNEP to contend with the major environmental challenges of the times should be enhanced. The status and role of UNEP in the governance of sustainable development should be considered in the preparatory process for the Conference on Sustainable Development, as one aspect of the institutional framework for sustainable development.

97. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) recalled that the oil slick that had spread over the entire Lebanese coast as a result of Israel's premeditated bombing of the oil storage tanks of the Jiyeh electric power plant during the Israeli aggression against Lebanon in the summer of 2006 had caused a grave and continuing environmental and economic disaster. Owing to the prevailing winds and sea currents, the oil slick, documented by satellite images, reports of the United Nations Environment Programme and numerous other international entities, had spread north to his country, polluting extensive portions of its coast. Despite repeated General Assembly resolutions (61/194, 62/188, 63/211 and 64/195) calling on Israel to assume its responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries affected by the oil slick, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel had yet to acknowledge its responsibilities, a matter regarding which the Secretary-General had expressed grave concern in his most recent report on the matter (A/66/297).

98. Israel's failure to implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions in blatant defiance of the will of the international community was part and parcel of its policy of non-compliance with international resolutions and considering itself above the law. During the current session, the Assembly must therefore make every effort to convey to Israel its clear condemnation and outright rejection of such hostile and irresponsible behaviour, and reiterate the demand that Israel assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic for the environmental damage caused by the spread of the oil slick.

99. Members of the Committee should reject Israel's attempts to disguise its non-compliance by submitting draft resolutions on sustainable development. His delegation hoped that future reports of the Secretary-General on the issue would include more specific conclusions and recommendations in order to highlight Israel's failure to comply with international resolutions and the need for it to provide compensation.

100. **Mr. Muñoz** (Peru) said that the challenges and opportunities faced by both developed and developing countries in pursuing sustainable development called for a change in current patterns of production and consumption, in particular in order to minimize behaviours damaging to the environment such as high energy use. Economic and social development must be geared to reducing poverty.

101. Natural resources, access to energy sources and economic and social development were intimately related to sustainable development. Developing countries, in particular, were facing problems of climate change, loss of biodiversity, deforestation and land degradation — all compounded by recurrent financial, energy and food crises. It was therefore essential, particularly on the eve of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to find

effective ways to implement what had been agreed since 1992.

102. Integrated environmental management and socio-economic activities aimed at promoting competitiveness and regional and global engagement should be built into government policies. To that end, Peru suggested some guiding principles. First, the cross-cutting nature of environmental management meant that activities of public authorities with responsibility for environmental issues should be coordinated and articulated at the national, sectoral, regional and local levels, with a view to pursuing integrated, harmonious, complementary initiatives with optimal results. Second, public initiatives should be subjected to a cost-benefit analysis of the resources invested and the social, environmental and economic returns expected. Third, public initiatives in the environmental sphere should contribute to improving the country's competitiveness while promoting socio-economic development and protection of the public interest. Fourth, public activities should be geared to results-based management and include incentive and disincentive mechanisms to ensure that expected results are achieved. Fifth, with regard to legal certainty, public activities should be based on clear, coherent standards and criteria, consistent over time, in order to ensure predictability, confidence and a gradual approach to public management of environmental affairs. Sixth, continuous improvement should be sought: environmental sustainability was a long-term goal to be reached through gradual, dynamic and continuous efforts. Seventh, public-private cooperation was needed: the pooling of efforts between the public and private sectors, including civil society, should be encouraged with the aim of pursuing common goals and sharing responsibilities for environmental management.

103. In Peru's experience, incorporating such principles in public policies had presented challenges in terms of capacity-building, dispute prevention, and effective compliance with legal mandates. Peru had therefore pursued inter-agency undertakings, decentralization and a search for synergies between authorities, the private sector and civil society. The active participation of citizens, especially from minority or vulnerable groups, was encouraged.

104. That experience had taught Peru the importance of promoting, at the multilateral level, access to mechanisms of technical assistance, transfer of technology and financial resources for strengthening national environmental capacities in the context of international agreements in force. Those lessons were also important for the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

105. The world was facing a situation in which only concerted action by the international community as a whole could ensure ultimate success. Accordingly, Peru called upon Member States to address pressing environmental issues in a constructive, rational, coherent, just and mutually supportive spirit, for the benefit of the world's peoples and of succeeding generations.

106. **Ms. Alraees** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country had made significant progress in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, notably by diversifying the country's sources of income and creating a varied, environmentally friendly economy. The United Arab Emirates was seeking to become a responsible producer of oil by supporting price stability, developing safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies, and working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Income from oil sales was being used to develop solar, wind, maritime and geothermal energy. A national high commission had been established with responsibility for monitoring and addressing climate change, and a range of climate mitigation laws had been adopted. The public and private sectors were cooperating to build Masdar City, a new centre for clean technologies. The country was host to the International Renewable Energy Agency and was developing what would eventually become the largest hydrogen energy plant in the world, which was expected to provide 7 per cent of national energy needs by 2020.

107. The Eye on Earth Summit, which would be held in Abu Dhabi from 12 to 15 December 2012, would provide an opportunity to discuss ways to access environmental data and find coordinated solutions to water shortage, food insecurity and climate change. The United Arab Emirates assisted numerous developing countries in tackling those challenges and was a regular contributor to the relevant United Nations agencies.

108. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that four decades after humankind had first addressed sustainability in

1972 in Stockholm, sustainability had become a development paradigm. However, the impacts of climate change were occurring with greater severity and frequency, reversing some of the progress made in realizing internationally agreed development goals. Countries like Bangladesh were least responsible for climate change, but ironically they bore the brunt of the consequences. It was, however, heartening that the world was more united than before to combat climate change. The seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was scheduled for December 2011 and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) for June 2012. Nations must harness the enthusiasm which existed and translate it into concrete actions. In that connection, equitable geographical representation must be ensured in the various bodies involved in the preparations for the Rio+20 Conference. Agreement at the Conference required that climate change discourse be depoliticized. Ambitious targets should be set for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries must make meaningful and unconditional commitments to reduce such emissions, as should advanced developing countries. The Conference outcome must protect the most vulnerable countries.

109. Adaptation remained key to both survival and development. It would require mobilizing substantial resources globally, regionally, nationally and even subnationally. Such resources should be distributed equitably and the participation of least developed countries in the clean development mechanism should be broadened. Annex I parties should provide further financial support to implement the Nairobi Framework.

110. A future climate change agreement must ensure that least developed countries and other vulnerable countries had access to eco-friendly and cost-effective technologies. A Technology Transfer Board should be established to facilitate technology transfers for sustainable development in the least developed countries.

111. Bangladesh looked forward to a consensus and action-oriented outcome from the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention and urged developed countries to undertake ambitious commitments in line with the Kyoto Protocol in subsequent commitment periods and to ensure that there was no conflict between the first and subsequent commitment periods.

112. The world was facing daunting challenges posed by disasters that were now occurring with greater intensity than before. The phenomena of erratic climate change and soaring global food prices compounded the challenges. Building resilience to natural disasters was vital. Concerted efforts at the national, regional and global levels were paramount. Substantially increasing investment in disaster risk reduction was urgently required to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. Adaptation could benefit from the knowledge and experiences of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) mechanisms. A better integration of DRR and adaptation measures could provide a tremendous boost for sustainable development. Bangladesh supported strengthening the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). The idea of alternative methods of financing, including secondments from agencies and Member States, needed to be carefully considered.

113. Nations must find the courage to save the planet by a pragmatic, holistic approach, working together to ensure that the most vulnerable groups received the support they needed to cope with climate change and disasters.

114. **Ms. Dong Zhihua** (People's Republic of China) said that since the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the idea of sustainable development had been widely embraced; many international treaty mechanisms had been created; and various forms of cooperation on environment and development had been going on. But the objectives set by the 1992 Conference were far from being achieved and countries still faced many challenges in realizing sustainable development. While problems besetting the developing countries, such as lack of finance, technology and capacity, required urgent solution, multiple new challenges had emerged, such as financial and food crises, regional unrest and natural disasters, making the pursuit of sustainable development even more difficult.

115. China attached great importance to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as an important opportunity for the international community to jointly develop a global strategy for sustainable development and hoped that it could fully take stock of the process of sustainable development over the previous two decades, strengthen political will, implement all commitments and adopt an action plan to push forward the course of sustainable development in an all-round manner. The Conference and its

preparatory process should adhere to the Rio spirit and principles, in particular the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", should advance the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced and coordinated way, should respect national ownership in sustainable development efforts and should give priority to addressing the concerns of the developing countries.

116. The Chinese Government strongly supported and was actively preparing for Rio. It had set up a preparatory committee consisting of 29 ministries and commissions, taken an active part in relevant preparatory processes and donated $500,000 to the Trust Fund of the Conference. The Chinese Government and the Conference secretariat had held a high-level symposium in Beijing, where open, candid, comprehensive, in-depth and highly productive discussions had been held on the themes and objectives of the Conference. China stood ready to strengthen cooperation with the rest of the international community to strive for more practical results at the Conference.

117. It was hoped that the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention in Durban would yield comprehensive, balanced, pragmatic and positive results. China was of the view that the Conference must maintain the dual tracks of negotiations on the Convention and the Protocol; adhere to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities"; make the negotiation a process driven by the Parties; and ensure openness, transparency, extensive participation and consensus. In accordance with the Bali Road Map, the Durban Conference should implement the 2010 Cancun Agreements, spell out relevant institutional arrangements and continue with negotiations on outstanding issues. Quantified emission reduction targets for developed States Parties to the Protocol in the second commitment period up to 2020 should be further defined; comparable emission reduction commitments for non-Party developed countries should be defined; and institutional arrangements for adaptation, finance, technological transfer and capacity-building should be put in place so as to support the developing countries in responding to climate change, including Measurement, Reporting and Verification and Transparency arrangements that differentiated between the developed and the developing countries.

118. For China, actively responding to climate change constituted a major strategy for economic and social development and an important opportunity to accelerate the transformation of the mode of economic growth and economic structural adjustment. China had set binding targets of reducing energy consumption per unit of GDP by 16 per cent and CO_2 emission per unit of GDP by 17 per cent, raising the share of non-fossil energy in the primary energy mix to 11.4 per cent and increasing forest carbon sinks. China would make vigorous efforts to control greenhouse gas emission, enhance its ability to adapt to climate change and engage in extensive international cooperation.

119. **Mrs. Espósito Guevara** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the world was on the brink of a new, large-scale economic and financial crisis involving its very model of growth, at the same time that an unprecedented ecological crisis, involving the exhaustion of natural resources and the saturation of the planet's natural carbon sinks, was looming.

120. As a result of the crisis, future generations would have much fewer resources than those that had gone before. If all countries were to grow like the United States, mankind would need six planets. The consumption patterns of the industrialized and capitalist countries were simply not sustainable. The solution was simple and obvious: mankind should consume resources and produce wastes at a rate that the planet and nature could support.

121. The reason why the world was so blindly going the wrong way in spite of the risks was that mankind was living under the capitalist system, which operated on a single premise: maximizing individual gain in the shortest possible time. One inevitable consequence was that consumption of resources and production of wastes could not stop growing. That paradox showed that the crisis was a crisis of the model of growth, which was leading to an ecological crisis with unforeseeable consequences.

122. Those were the dilemmas that would have to be resolved at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. But the solution would not be found in "the green economy". That was a proposal designed to deepen the logic of private profit, bringing everything — air, water, carbon and the functions of nature — into the realm of business. The private sector, whose main concern was not protecting nature but making profits, could not be expected to save the

planet. The so-called green economy model was good for capital but not for the planet, since it sought to create a market of ecosystems that would enable the developed countries to receive payments while evading their commitments.

123. Bolivia wished to make clear that it would not accept under the banner of "green economy" a market-style environmentalism that would put a price on the functions of nature, turning them into a new business sector for private investment and speculation.

124. Under no circumstances would Bolivia accept proposals that would privatize water or increase its cost, or the creation of a world water market for the benefit of private companies. Water was a human right, fundamental to life and to the realization of other rights; it constituted a key resource for development and should be guaranteed by States for the benefit of all citizens, not for the private sector.

125. The solution was likewise not to be found by seeking more efficient technologies in order to continue growing. There was no point in greater technological efficiency if, at the same time, one promoted greater consumption. The aim was to grow at a pace that the planet could sustain.

126. Achieving sustainable development meant ensuring that development did not destroy the Earth's natural cycles, and that meant thinking about other paradigms of development. According to many scientific studies, the previous 50 years had seen the fastest change in the relationship between human beings and nature in history. Human activity had begun to outstrip the workings of the planet's systems in many respects that went well beyond changing temperatures. One of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century would be to restore the balance with nature, reorienting the world economy in such a way as to preserve and restore the integrity and interconnections of the Earth's natural cycles and enabling ecosystems to adapt to current environmental changes and to regenerate and diversify their species. That was what Bolivia understood as the rights of nature and that was the aim of the resolution on harmony with nature that it presented each year in the Commission on Sustainable Development.

127. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should not renegotiate Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; rather, it should strongly reaffirm them. It was fundamental to advance the sovereignty of States over their own resources, the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities, the historical responsibility of the developed countries, international cooperation, and transfer of technology and finance to the developing countries. The major objectives of the Conference should be to achieve a solid commitment to eradicating poverty and restoring harmony with nature. That was the responsibility of the Member States as countries and as inhabitants of Earth, a planet which they had borrowed from succeeding generations but had failed to safeguard.

128. **Ms. Smith** (Norway) said that mankind had made enormous strides in the almost 20 years since the Earth Summit in 1992. World GDP had tripled. Life expectancy had increased by many years in almost all countries. Under-5 child mortality had fallen from more than 12 million to 7.2 million. Hundreds of millions had been lifted out of abject poverty and the middle classes were growing. Still, hundreds of millions had not benefited from globalization and growth and there were unsustainable and increasing inequalities in most countries. Great progress had been made in managing industrial pollution and hazards, but natural resources had come under increasing strain. Increasing food production and securing access to affordable food was a constant challenge. Energy consumption had increased by 40 per cent and the world still relied too heavily on fossil fuels. And that dependence entailed enormous consequences and threats. The world was clearly on an unsustainable path.

129. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development provided a unique opportunity to take a renewed, integrated approach to sustainable development, reconciling growth with social justice and environmental needs. The issues of climate change must be resolved. Many countries seemed unable or unwilling to address those challenges in a responsible manner. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should therefore address a number of issues, namely, energy; sustainable production and consumption; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by preventing deforestation and land degradation; green jobs; and gender equality in promoting sustainable development.

130. Energy use had a bearing on growth, health, education, gender equality and job creation. Providing more energy from renewable sources was a win-win strategy for sustainable development. Norway's energy

and climate initiative known as Energy+ was geared to increasing energy access, accelerating technological change and promoting renewable energy. The Conference should decide on a strategy for following up the Secretary-General's call for "Sustainable Energy for All".

131. Green taxes were important instruments in pursuing sustainable production and consumption. Norway had been a pioneer in that respect since it had imposed carbon taxes on its own petroleum industry in 1991. Despite some initial scepticism, people realized that the carbon taxes had not jeopardized growth and employment, and had proved to be an effective means of encouraging investment in renewable energy and green alternatives.

132. Norway supported the establishment of methods and institutions for facilitating the scaling up of payments for verified emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation, in particular under the REDD+ programme.

133. Green jobs, a key to making the transition to a greener economy, helped to reduce consumption of energy and raw materials, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, and protect ecosystems. All sectors and types of enterprises, in urban and rural areas, and in countries at all levels of economic development, had the potential of becoming greener. Norway supported a socially equitable transition, based on inclusive social dialogue and fundamental principles and workers' rights.

134. High female participation in the formal workforce gave countries a competitive edge. Improving gender equality policies and investing in girls' and women's health and education was therefore not only a matter of human rights but of sound macroeconomic policy and a prerequisite for sustainable development. Such policies would be effective only when women empowered themselves and took part in political life, including in decision-making processes relating to natural resources. Norway would promote the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the outcomes of the Rio Conference.

135. **Mr. Chipaziwa** (Zimbabwe) said that there remained exactly four years to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but many countries, especially in Africa, were not on track to do so. The world faced a myriad of problems ranging from financial and energy crises to the effects of ever-growing poverty. Developing countries, while contributing the least to global financial crises and climate change, were the most affected by them; hence their inability to meet some of the MDGs, including that of ensuring environmental sustainability.

136. As preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development gathered momentum, Zimbabwe believed that it was time to take stock of what had been previously agreed between the developed and developing countries in order to assess progress and the shortcomings encountered. It was time to make good on the commitments made in 1992 and produce tangible results. The Conference also provided an opportunity to assess some concepts such as "green economy", which meant different things to different countries. For the third world, it must not be used as a new trade conditionality that hindered development. "Green economy" should strengthen the linkages between the three pillars of sustainable development for the benefit of developing countries.

137. Despite the financial and economic problems that Zimbabwe had been facing as a result of economic sanctions imposed by some Western countries, the country remained committed to efforts to achieve the MDGs, including that of sustainable development. In Zimbabwe there was widespread awareness of the environment and of activities detrimental to the environment. The establishment of the Environmental Management Agency called for self-monitoring. Increasing requests for air pollution tests and Environmental Impact Assessments by companies showed that the enactment of Zimbabwe's Environmental Management Act was having a positive impact on environmental awareness and management.

138. In the 1980s Zimbabwe had embarked on community-based natural resources management programmes through a home-grown initiative called Community Area Management for Indigenous Resources, stressing forest resources and wildlife, which had spread throughout the country and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. At the regional and subregional levels, Zimbabwe participated in environmental monitoring and natural resources conservation programmes under the auspices of SADC and the African Union.

139. Like other developing countries, Zimbabwe faced the challenges of lack of institutional, technical capacities and limited budgetary resources in its quest

to achieve the MDG for environmental sustainability. The country welcomed development assistance in areas such as the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements; environmental awareness; capacity-building in data collection; analysis and dissemination; exploitation and development of alternative energy sources and provision of clean water and sanitation. In that regard the fulfilment by developed countries of the official development assistance commitments that they had voluntarily undertaken remained key to enhancing capacity-building, scientific, technical and technological capacity and development for developing countries.

140. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that his country was acutely aware of the need to preserve natural sea life for the benefit of all. As rightly stated in the Secretary-General's report, coral reefs provided social, economic and environmental benefits for millions of people. Malta had been the proponent of what had become the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, whose basic principle was establishing the sea as the common heritage of mankind. The Government of Malta had made the marine environment a focus of its work. Malta was proud of the progress it had achieved in sea water quality and sea life preservation. Malta was 95.4 per cent compliant with strict EU bathing water standards and was the only Mediterranean country that treated all waste water before it was discharged into the sea.

141. The Government of Malta had initiated a broad public consultation process concerning all aspects of the environment in order to update the national environment policy. The national policy focused on six main themes: greening the economy; safeguarding environmental health; using resources efficiently and sustainably; improving the local environment; addressing more sustainable forms of agriculture, transport and tourism; and long-term sustainability issues, including climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems, and environment-related emergencies.

142. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should provide the necessary groundwork to re-invigorate environmentally friendly economies and mark the start of a worldwide transition to green economies. Malta supported the enhancement and upgrading of UNEP to make it the United Nations voice on environmental matters.

143. Malta continued to strongly support initiatives to mitigate the effects of climate change, particularly on small and vulnerable island States. It hoped that progress achieved at previous climate change conferences would be consolidated at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Durban.

144. Malta was active in supporting the project on climate change diplomacy of the DiploFoundation, with the aim of strengthening policy capacity of small and developing States, focusing on awareness-raising among diplomats and policymakers. The project had involved over 160 participants in intensive, high-quality online training and research on climate change issues relevant to the participants' countries, and was scheduled to continue in 2012.

145. **Mr. Nakonechnyi** (Ukraine) said that active and constructive preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in particular in the Second Committee, would help to ensure the success of that coming milestone meeting. In that regard, his delegation commended the Economic Commission for Europe and UNEP for their contributions to the preparatory process.

146. Ukraine appreciated the specific focus of the Conference on green economy and poverty eradication, which should be the main goals of sustainable development policies. The Conference should give more balanced and coordinated treatment to environmental issues, take bold and forward-looking decisions on strengthening the architecture of environmental governance, and more vigorously address land degradation, desertification and loss of biodiversity, which threatened food security and triggered social and economic tensions.

147. The High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on land degradation, desertification and drought held on 20 September 2011 had been a good opportunity to advance those important issues on the United Nations sustainable development agenda. Ukraine commended the launch of new global initiatives in that field, particularly the FAO-led Global Soil Partnership for Food Security and European Commission-led Economics for Land Degradation, and looked forward to participating in their implementation.

148. There was a need to reinforce the role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as a key instrument for sustainable land

management in all parts of the world. The recent Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD, held in the Republic of Korea, had made welcome progress in implementation of the ten-year strategy of the Convention. But increased scientific support for UNCCD, especially its Committee on Science and Technology, was needed. More emphasis should be given to actions that enabled synergies between UNCCD and other environmental instruments, promoting regional coordination mechanisms, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, and enhanced participation of civil society. For its part, Ukraine was committed to effective implementation of the Convention. Work was being done to put in place the Programme to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation through 2013.

149. With regard to the issue of biological diversity, his delegation was pleased with the ambitious outcome of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing, soon to be signed by Ukraine. He also commended the Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 which set out clear targets for implementation of the Convention for the following 10 years. Many of those targets had been integrated by Ukraine into its National Plan of Action.

150. Ukraine was committed to achieving sustainable development. It had recently adopted new legislation aimed at adapting national environmental standards to European and international standards and instituting a balanced approach to the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development.

151. In pursuance of the aims of the new legislation, a National Plan of Action on Environmental Protection for 2011-2015 had been adopted, providing a framework for mainstreaming environment into national policies and strategies. Work was under way on a draft "National concept for development of cleaner production and environment technologies through 2020". To that end an inter-agency working group had been formed with experts from the Ministry of Environment of Ukraine, UNEP, UNIDO, as well as representatives of civil society and academia.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/66/SR.30

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Summary record of the 30th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 1 November 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Donckel (Vice-Chair) .... **(Luxembourg)**

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Donckel (Luxembourg), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (A/66/87, A/66/297, A/66/298, A/66/298/Corr.1, A/66/337, A/66/388 and A/66/391)

- **(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (A/66/287, A/66/304 and A/C.2/66/2)
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1. **Mr. Djoghlaf** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing under sub-item (f), his report on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity contained in chapter III of document A/66/291, expressed the hope that the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would be part of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

2. **Ms. Salih** (Sudan) said that the success of the Rio+20 Conference would depend on an earnest long-term political commitment, including provisions for funding, technology transfer and capacity-building to combat poverty. Measures to green the economy should comply with the Rio Principles, combining a commitment to prosperity with respect for national sovereignty. The seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (the Durban Conference) would need to confront a number of challenges, not least the future of the Kyoto Protocol.

3. In view of its vast and fertile agricultural sector, the Sudan had the potential to be an international exporter of food commodities. Her Government had been pursuing an agricultural development programme for several years. However, as a least developed country (LDC) and a country emerging from conflict, it needed international support in order to attract investment for the sustainable management of farmland, forests and other natural resources. The international community could assist it by fulfilling official development assistance (ODA) commitments, facilitating market access, and improving access to technologies on preferential terms and without conditionalities.

4. **Mr. Kalpokas** (Vanuatu) said that, like all small island developing States, Vanuatu faced critical challenges in its efforts to achieve sustainable development and, for that reason, remained concerned about the slow rate of implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, which was currently the only global strategy for addressing their particular vulnerabilities. Improvements in data collection and analysis, as well as better financial and technical support, were needed with a view to enhancing the accountability and transparency of existing sustainable development programmes and achieving more tangible progress. His delegation looked to the United Nations to embrace that strategy more fully and provide a platform for it.

5. The interlinkage between sustainable development and climate change also needed to be adequately taken into account and should be reflected in the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference, while priority attention should be given to the protection and sustainable management of fisheries and oceans. The protection of coral reefs in particular was of vital

economic and social concern to the 30 million people worldwide dependent on them for their livelihoods. He called on other delegations to join his own in supporting a strong resolution on the subject. Looking ahead to the Durban Conference, he urged all delegations to work towards the establishment of a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and the operationalization of the Cancun Agreements, including the proposed Green Climate Fund.

6. **Ms. Masot Planas** (Cuba) said that the universally agreed goals of environmental sustainability still remained out of reach in the current context of multiple crises. Developing countries were continuing to make huge efforts to achieve sustainable development while contending with increasingly difficult obstacles, notably the lack of necessary additional resources, their limited access to new technologies and the continuing stalemate of the Doha Round negotiations. Rich countries must, as a matter of urgency, show the necessary political will to bring about a lasting reversal in the situation; that depended essentially on the development of alternative sustainable economic models grounded in a new international economic order.

7. Just as the countries of the South were suffering from an economic and financial crisis triggered by the failure of the neo-liberal economic model, so also were they currently facing an environmental crisis that was not of their making. It was ever more necessary for developed countries to give evidence of wise leadership through ambitious commitments to the reduction of greenhouse emissions in order to slow down climate change and avert its disastrous effects. The Durban Conference offered an opportunity to arrive at a binding agreement to that effect. Cuba similarly looked to the Rio+20 Conference to reaffirm the Rio Principles, in particular principle 2 on the sovereign right of States to exploit their own resources and principle 7 on States' common but differentiated responsibilities for environmental degradation. Given that sustainable development offered the only means whereby the countries of the South could exercise their right to development, international cooperation through multilateral mechanisms was essential for them to attain that end. Environmental and economic sustainability would remain an empty slogan without transfers of environment-friendly technology, cancellation of the foreign debt of developing countries, the elimination of market inequalities and changes to unfair patterns of income distribution worldwide.

8. **Mr. Radian** (Israel) said that his country was spearheading innovative technology and ideas towards sustainable development, which had never been a greater imperative than at the current time when the world's natural resources were being recklessly depleted. Not only had Israel long been developing methods to conserve energy, but it was also committed to reducing its dependence on oil, the rising price of which was inseparable from the onset of poverty and rising food prices, particularly in developing countries. The use of renewable and notably solar energy was accordingly being promoted in the country, particularly through the Eilat-Eilot renewable energy initiative, while wise water management, including the recycling of wastewater, was seen as having a crucial role in combating desertification and ensuring sustainability. Integrated waste management was also practised, in view of the country's scant land resources.

9. Israel's commitment to sustainable development was further illustrated by an international meeting it had recently hosted on the use of green agriculture to stimulate economic growth and eradicate poverty. Its private sector had recognized the economic potential of green innovation and investment and had formed partnerships with the Government to achieve sustainable development goals. Israel was also committed to the attainment of those goals at the international level and in the long term, especially since those countries that contributed the least to climate change were its biggest victims. It accordingly looked forward to the Rio+20 Conference as an opportunity for the international community to work together to that end.

10. **Mr. Ngculu** (South Africa) joined other speakers in welcoming the opportunity offered by the Rio+20 Conference to make good on earlier intergovernmental commitments. Resource-rich countries must demonstrate renewed political will in order to help the destitute in the developing world and respond more effectively to global challenges that were undermining the capacity of countries to achieve sustainable development. Efforts towards a green economy should not be at the expense of the socio-economic advancement of the poor and should not serve as a pretext for trade protectionism. For there to be a level playing field for all, developing countries needed to be

assisted financially in meeting their sustainable development goals.

11. South Africa was also looking forward to the forthcoming Durban Conference which it was hosting, conscious of the various adverse effects of climate change. The Conference should produce an equitable, inclusive and credible outcome that would take into account the greater vulnerability of certain regions, due to poverty, underdevelopment and geographical situation. A global regime to address climate change should accordingly include higher global emission reduction targets and enhancement of the adaptive capacity of developing countries. Such an outcome needed to be informed by the following principles: preserving and strengthening the multilateral response to climate change, environmental integrity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, equity and honouring of international commitments. His delegation counted on the support of all the parties in ensuring the operationalization of the key mechanisms and institutional arrangements agreed upon at the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Cancun, Mexico, in 2010.

12. **Ms. Gregg** (Liechtenstein) said that the Rio+20 Conference was a generational opportunity to set a new course. For it to be successful, it should produce a political commitment at the highest level to the establishment of a green economy worldwide that would promote sustainable development and contribute to poverty eradication while ensuring democracy, good governance and respect for human rights. To that end, Liechtenstein favoured a forward-looking, action-oriented outcome guided by the internationally agreed development goals, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The outcome document should include a green economy road map setting out goals, concrete measures and mechanisms and timelines and provide the impetus to develop new and necessary indicators to complement traditional indices of economic growth. Sustainable development goals should not divert attention from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but reflect a renewed commitment to development through a new and universal focus on sustainability supported by a strengthened institutional architecture.

13. The Rio+20 Conference should result in reforms that would ensure the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and the enhanced implementation of related policies and programmes. Her delegation supported proposals to improve system-wide coordination to that end and to transform the Commission on Sustainable Development into a Council subsidiary to the General Assembly. Liechtenstein also supported proposals to upgrade the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the status of specialized agency of the system so as to enable it to become the leading global voice for the environment.

14. **Ms. Al-Shaaban** (Kuwait) said that the international community must put in place an effective, democratic and transparent global partnership guaranteeing cooperation between the countries of the North and the South. States should comply with their commitment to provide ODA equivalent to 0.7 per cent of their gross national product; her own country's average ODA was well above that target.

15. Her country was a long-standing contributor to international development projects and had provided 104 countries with preferential loans and development assistance. The Amir of Kuwait had launched a range of development initiatives, including a programme for the reconstruction of eastern Sudan and a $2 billion project launched at the Arab Economic Summit to promote small and medium-sized enterprises, to which her Government had contributed $500 million. A national development plan had been adopted for the period 2010-2014 with a budget of over $100 billion in order to develop infrastructure, improve education and health care, reduce the country's reliance on the oil sector and promote it as a financial hub.

16. Kuwait was currently enacting national strategies to preserve biodiversity. Several Government agencies, as well as non-governmental and civil organizations, were involved in environmental conservation and research. Wildlife reserves for endangered animals had been opened, and projects were under way to study and protect herbivorous species and plants.

17. Kuwait called on the international community to take action to combat climate change through the use of alternative clean energy in all sectors, the listing of restrictions on low-level emission technologies and the adoption of natural and regional work plans.

18. **Mr. Srivali** (Thailand) said that recent challenges to development raised the question of how far development policies had been sustainable in the past. A new model was needed that would advance inclusive growth while promoting global sustainability in a

holistic and balanced manner. The Rio+20 Conference would provide an opportunity to put forward such a new paradigm for development and at the same time to propose a new and effective institutional framework, possibly through a sustainable development council that would ensure greater policy coherence throughout the system in the pursuit of a balanced and integrated approach.

19. His delegation supported green economy options that were consistent with an open, equitable, rules-based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system and that ensured market access for developing countries and the narrowing of technology gaps. Such an approach fitted in with the sufficiency economy philosophy practised in Thailand. In a world of finite resources, the path to sustainability began with the practice of moderation.

20. **Mr. Al Seedi** (Iraq) said that desertification posed a grave danger to biodiversity. Mismanagement of agricultural land, forests and grasslands, combined with climate change, had exacerbated the problem. An array of coordinated measures would be needed in order to reverse the process and regenerate the environment. Scientific studies should be conducted, and policies should be developed in order to train staff and establish environmentally friendly land management systems.

21. In May 2010, Iraq had acceded to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which was an indispensable part of the international effort to tackle the issue. Failure to take action would jeopardize the survival of vulnerable communities.

22. **Ms. Hussain** (Maldives) recalled that small island developing States had been recognized as a special case for sustainable development 20 years earlier at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Rio+20 Conference should adequately address the unique challenges facing them in that respect, in particular by making good on past commitments. Maldives joined with other such States in calling for a third global conference on the sustainable development of small island developing States. It likewise joined with them in calling for the formal recognition of a special category of such States within the United Nations system, with access to dedicated financing and concessionary conditions.

23. For Maldives, the green economy was a blue economy, dependent on fisheries and tourism. The overexploitation of fisheries was therefore a matter of great concern to her country as it endangered its sustainable development, which was also affected by ocean acidification and climate change. The protection of the ocean, of its coral and fish stocks, was a central issue for each of the three pillars of its sustainable development and should be addressed at the Rio+20 Conference. Moreover, sustainable development was closely intertwined with climate change which remained the greatest challenge to Maldives. A global movement towards sustainability could avert further impacts of climate change on small islands. Reduced carbon emissions would not only contribute to that movement; through job creation and the triggering of technological innovation, it could also form a basis for sustainable development, which was at the core of the survival of Maldives.

24. **Mr. Singh** (India) said that there had recently been a sudden shift of global attention away from sustainable development and environment to questions of finance and employment. However, it was becoming increasingly clear that, as a matter of urgency, priority should be assigned to environmental concerns, with special attention to the challenges facing small island developing States and to the consequences of desertification and land degradation. Climate change mitigation required new, more resistant and higher-yielding crops, while adaptation might call for dislocation of habitats and a re-engineering of economic activity. The question was whether the necessary large investments should be financed by a universal carbon tax and how much differentiation and concessionality it might accommodate. Access to technology was a further related concern: it should be guaranteed and affordable and subject to appropriate intellectual property rights regimes.

25. A holistic, integrated framework needed to be developed in order to embrace all those concerns, even if only through an incremental approach, given that a grand agreement might not be practical. His delegation looked to the Rio+20 Conference for such an outcome, convinced that the General Assembly must be encouraged to reposition sustainable development and environment as global priorities. India, for its part, along with other large developing countries, and notwithstanding its own small carbon footprint, was ready to assume more than its fair responsibility. His

Government had already outlined a credible action plan on climate change and global warming and made provision for appropriate action as part of its twelfth five-year plan. It looked forward to acting in close concert with the Group of 77 and other member countries to regenerate public awareness of the related issues.

26. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Japan) said that each country should frame its own strategy for putting in place a green economy; that approach was one of the most effective means of achieving sustainable development, which also required the promotion of investment for technological innovation; economic growth and job creation could result. The importance of a green economy should therefore be emphasized at the Rio+20 Conference, which should also make a useful contribution to discussions on the international development agenda beyond 2015. Human security, based on a people-centred, holistic approach, could be a key guiding principle.

27. With a view to the Rio+20 Conference, Japan had put forward a number of proposals in areas of which it had experience and knowledge, including disaster risk reduction, energy and food security, and was preparing specific related initiatives, in particular on a future sustainable city model and citizen development for a sustainable society. Japan considered that sustainable development required the promotion of integrated efforts at national, regional and international levels and a balance between economy, society and environment. In addition, the function of the Commission on Sustainable Development should be improved, notably through the introduction of a peer review mechanism. The strengthening of institutional frameworks for environmental issues was an urgent task, best achieved through a step-by-step approach, starting with the promotion of synergies between existing multilateral environmental agreements and leading eventually to the establishment of a specialized organization.

28. **Mr. Kalandarov** (Tajikistan) said that coordinated efforts on the part of the international community were required to address the challenge of climate change, whose effects included the accelerated melting of glaciers. Tajikistan, as the source of 60 per cent of the water resources of Central Asia, was proposing to establish an international fund to save glaciers and invited other Member States to support it. The cooperation and support of the international community and donors were also required to address the crisis resulting from the degradation of the Aral sea, caused by irrational use of water resources and unsustainable agricultural practices. Water was essential for sustainable development and indeed for the preservation of life and called for a strengthening of international and regional water cooperation. Tajikistan had accordingly led the initiative to declare 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation. Within that framework, his Government intended to organize several regional and international activities. It expected the Rio+20 Conference to provide an opportunity to explore ways of strengthening cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders on related issues.

29. Energy resources were likewise of the utmost importance for sustainable development. For that reason, Tajikistan fully supported universal access to modern energy services, in particular through the development and use of renewable energy, which was an important means of combating climate change. He called, in conclusion, for encouragement and support for projects aimed at increasing the global share of renewable energy and enhancing energy supply and conservation.

30. **Mr. Chibaeff** (France) said that the system of international environmental governance was no longer equal to the task of confronting the multiple environmental challenges threatening the world. The international environmental pillar was fragile, fragmented and ineffective. If that situation continued unchecked, UNEP would grow weaker and its authority and capabilities would decline. The result would be catastrophic for the environment in particular and for the multilateral system in general since in the absence of a strong centre of gravity, worsening tensions over natural resources and raw materials would be settled through bilateral relations. UNEP must therefore be transformed into an organization with full legal personality in which all Member States were represented which would be a source of recognized authority with access to a stable resource stream. At the same time, a more globalized approach to sustainable development in all of its dimensions was needed.

31. The concept of a green economy, in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, reflected the reality that growth, employment and environmental protection were three aspects of the same paradigm. The "road map" provided by the European Union (EU) incorporated indicators of social,

environmental and long-term progress into measures of national performance, thereby eliminating the seeming contradiction between growth and environmental protection. The United Nations could assist countries in drawing up strategies adapted to their specific needs.

32. France had taken specific measures in several key areas to demonstrate its commitment to sustainable development. It was engaged in efforts to ensure universal access to water resources and sanitation and would be hosting the sixth World Water Forum in Marseille in March 2012. The Forum would focus on issues of water management, water as the engine of a green economy, and water as an essential element for poverty eradication. France had launched, with Kenya, the Paris-Nairobi Climate Initiative to promote clean energy projects based on low carbon development strategies for developing countries in Africa and countries at risk from climate change. About 15 countries had joined the Initiative so far and were working to structure the projects and establish conditions to attract investments. France also accorded priority to land degradation and desertification, and to protection of the marine environment. Two important aspects were protection of biodiversity in the marine areas situated beyond the jurisdiction of States; and protection of coral reefs throughout the world, an issue in which France had been actively involved for many years, in association with its overseas territories.

33. **Mr. Souissi** (Morocco) said that despite the remarkable progress that had been made by a number of developing countries since the holding of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, sustainable development had not become established as a global economic alternative. The repercussions of natural disasters and environmental degradation demonstrated how much the international community had yet to achieve in order to establish the conditions necessary for the realization of a new global environmental regime.

34. Morocco had made significant progress in promoting sustainable development through the establishment of a legal framework to address environmental issues. Faced with numerous challenges, it had adopted a series of new development strategies, focused on the priority objectives of economic growth, poverty eradication, rural advancement and protection of the environment. His Government had initiated a mega solar project aimed at diversifying national energy resources and enhancing the national power grid, which would be completed in 2019. It was working towards the goal of completely eliminating greenhouse gas emissions by cities in the country's south. It had recently drawn up a national charter for the environment and sustainable development which would preserve land and natural resources and ensure the sustainable growth of industry and tourism, on a basis of respect for biodiversity and promotion of social progress.

35. **Ms. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that the promotion of sustainable development continued to be challenged by the impact of climate change on developing countries; more effective measures needed to be taken to tackle the problems. The international response should include the strengthening of the Hyogo Framework for Action for disaster risk reduction and support for the implementation of strategies for preparedness, rapid response, recovery and development. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol should be the primary framework for negotiating a global response to climate change, which should address not only the consequences but also the roots of the problem. The Rio+20 Conference would be an important opportunity to advance concrete measures and establish international partnerships.

36. Jordan's biodiversity was an important global resource; her Government had taken a number of conservation measures, including the establishment of national protected areas, strict monitoring of wildlife and the application of strategic environmental assessments as a means to promote sustainable development. New biodiversity initiatives were helping to alleviate poverty in rural communities and promote popular support for nature conservation. Several projects to develop ecotourism and other small nature-based businesses had been implemented and served as engines of income generation. Nevertheless, as a country characterized by a semi-arid climate, which contributed very little to global emissions, Jordan continued to be impacted by climate change.

37. **Ms. Bubanja** (Serbia) said that the Rio+20 Conference would provide a historic opportunity to reach agreements on sustainable development policies that would reduce poverty and create new jobs, encourage clean energy and promote the sustainable use of resources. Her Government believed that UNEP should be upgraded into a specialized agency so that

environmental issues could be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

38. Serbia had already made considerable progress in devising national policies to promote sustainable development, production and consumption. It was committed to a green economy, which offered possibilities for investment in the environmental infrastructure and for the development of new skills and technologies. In order to achieve those goals, the support of European and international financial institutions must be assured, and new and innovative financing and cooperation mechanisms needed to be defined.

39. Noting that 2012 had been proclaimed the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, she said that although energy demand worldwide was on the rise, especially in the emerging economies, it might be erroneous to claim that energy was in short supply as there were still alternative sources of fossil fuels. It could be argued that there was an overabundance of energy sources and that, through the excessive use of fuels and creation of the greenhouse effect, humans were contributing to climate change. Her delegation believed that every country should reduce carbon emissions and work with United Nations partners to build national strategies for that purpose.

40. In that context General Assembly resolution 61/151 represented an important milestone in the creation of an alternate energy future. Greater investment must be made in renewable sources of energy. It was vital for countries to devise comprehensive strategies to increase the level of energy efficiency. In particular, such strategies should address the problems of public transportation by reducing the use of automobiles, encouraging job creation in local communities affected by long commutes and, where gasoline demand was inelastic, introducing fuel tax increases and using the proceeds to fund the development of renewable sources of energy and green businesses. It was very important for every strategy to include technology transfers from developed to developing countries.

41. **Mr. Seyoum** (Eritrea) said that as a country located in an arid and semi-arid region, Eritrea was highly concerned by the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought, and was particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including climate variability. His country had acceded to the major international environmental instruments, and at the regional level had joined 10 other countries of the Great Green Wall Initiative to halt the advance of the Sahara. At the national level, it was implementing appropriate policies, strategies and programmes to reduce poverty, improve food security and combat land degradation.

42. His Government believed that any action to reverse land degradation should be country-driven and have a strong element of community participation and ownership. Under that approach it had established extensive forest reserves and national parks, promoted the practice of hillside terracing and planted more than 90 million tree seedlings; it had also constructed over 300 dams in various parts of the country. It had taken measures to improve the knowledge base on desertification, land degradation and drought so as to facilitate informed decisions and timely and appropriate preparedness and mitigation measures, and had strengthened monitoring and early warning systems for drought and desertification. Since desertification, land degradation and drought were interlinked problems, closer cooperation was needed at the global, national and regional levels.

43. **Mr. Scepanovic** (Montenegro) said that his Government regarded sustainable development as one of its main priorities and was progressively harmonizing its legal framework with the European Union *acquis* as part of the accession process. An institutional framework had been established and a large number of strategic documents had been adopted concerning sectors relevant to sustainable development.

44. As part of the preparations for the Rio+20 Conference his Government had organized the 14th meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the South-East European Cooperation Process, at which the Budva Declaration had been adopted. It had signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme office in Montenegro on the provision of support to the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism in continuing the preparations for the Rio+20 Conference; as a result of that cooperation, a multi-stakeholder consultative meeting had been held in October 2011 to conduct a national assessment of the progress made.

45. Since gaining independence in 2006, Montenegro had harmonized its laws with EU policy and had

acceded to the Energy Community Treaty, which obliged it to follow EU policies with regard to energy, the environment and the concurrent energy market. It was according priority to the sustainable development of the energy sector through the use of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. Montenegro had significant natural resources, including hydroelectric power, biomass and solar energy, as well as potential for energy savings and conservation. It was working on creating incentives for the implementation of renewable energy projects. In early 2012, construction would begin on two wind power plants and a dozen small hydroelectric plants. In addition there would be a sustained focus on using biomass and solar energy, especially for heating and cooling purposes, as well as the use of cogeneration systems to address the problems of waste disposal and energy security through decentralized energy systems. Montenegro was also working on environmental protection standards and on prioritizing the use of natural resources depending on needs.

46. **Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon** (Republic of Korea) said that despite the considerable progress made since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 1992 the world had fallen far short of achieving its goals because of the lack of a fundamental change in the conventional development paradigm. His country considered a green economy to be at the heart of such a change.

47. In 2008 his country had adopted a Low Carbon, Green Growth strategy as a new vision for the next 60 years. It had established a presidential committee on green growth in 2009, enacted a framework act on low carbon, green growth in 2010 and had committed to investing 2 per cent of its gross domestic product in developing green technologies and related infrastructures. His delegation believed that effective institutions were critical in advancing green economy and sustainable development. In particular, institutional mechanisms to facilitate financial assistance and technology transfer to developing countries were crucial to the success of the Rio+20 process.

48. The Commission on Sustainable Development had done an effective job of integrating the three pillars of sustainable development rather than focusing primarily on environmental policy, but its capacity had remained too limited. In the short term the Commission should be strengthened in order to enable greater integration and collaboration of other international institutions, while in the long term the idea of creating a sustainable development council merited further consideration.

49. Climate change represented a serious obstacle to achieving sustainable development by reducing available food and water, increasing migration and altering coastal boundaries. Failure to combat climate change would ultimately degrade human economic development on a vast scale, causing a steep increase in the level of poverty and social hardship. In that regard, the Durban Conference was of vital importance; a clear plan was needed regarding implementation of the Cancun Agreements and the extension of the Kyoto Protocol.

50. Korea has hosted the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to "Combat" Desertification in Changwon just 10 days earlier. The Changwon Initiative aimed to further the implementation of the Convention and its 10-year strategy had been adopted at the Conference with the aim of enhancing the efforts for countries in need through active programmes to address desertification.

51. The international community should ensure that the benefits of modern and clean energy were available to all as a matter of equity and also as an issue of urgent practicality. Improving access to modern energy services would give the poorest people an opportunity to escape from extreme poverty, while switching to renewable energy would help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to mitigate the risks of climate change. Korea welcomed the Initiative of Sustainable Energy for All.

52. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) said that his delegation hoped that the Rio+20 Conference would launch a new era for sustainable development by identifying the obstacles to its attainment and by adopting measures to implement all past and future commitments. In the face of persistent crises and challenges, in particular the economic and financial crisis, poverty and food security, and climate change, the Conference would be an important opportunity to reaffirm and renew the political commitment, at the highest level, to implement the decisions taken. The final document should therefore be based on the principles adopted at the 1992 Conference, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and should bolster the three pillars of sustainable development in

the context of a comprehensive, integrated, balanced and synergistic manner.

53. The concept of a green economy should be approached in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development and should under no circumstances be used as a tool to impose additional constraints on the allocation of ODA or strengthen protectionist measures against the exports of developing countries; nor should it constitute an obstacle to the achievement of the MDGs. Access to green technologies and increased financial assistance to developing countries were the necessary preconditions for sustainable development and poverty eradication. In that regard, satisfactory answers must be provided regarding the impact of patents in building a green economy. The Rio+20 Conference should promote coherence and coordination and should strengthen the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, promote multilateralism and further strengthen the role of the United Nations in economic and financial governance.

54. The successful outcome of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as well as the high-level meeting on desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication held during the current session of the General Assembly had established the Convention as a top priority for the international community and should help mobilize appropriate financial and technical assistance for countries confronting desertification, land degradation and drought. The outcome of the two meetings should inform the final document at the Rio+20 Conference. It was alarming that Africa was currently experiencing a severe drought and a grave food crisis. Algeria called for vigorous measures to combat desertification and make the issue a pressing priority in order to prevent further famines and humanitarian disasters.

55. Developing countries, which were the most affected by climate change and the most threatened by the current impasse, were concerned about the slow pace of negotiations; there was a need to ensure the effective implementation of the commitments made at the United Nations Climate Change Conferences held in Copenhagen and Cancun in terms of financing adaptation programmes and transfer of technologies, while bearing in mind the imperative need to establish a new commitment cycle beyond 2012 in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

56. His delegation welcomed the success of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and undertook to work with all partners to ensure the implementation of the 10-year strategy to protect biodiversity, the international protocol and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

57. **Mr. Dingha** (Congo) said that it was clear that no single country could meet the challenges of sustainable development on its own. In that regard Agenda 21 reflected a global consensus and a political commitment at the highest level to cooperate on issues related to development and the environment. Yet progress in meeting its goals was decidedly mixed. The increasing pollution of the oceans and the depletion of fish stocks, the unsustainable use of forests and arable land, the inexorable advance of desertification, global warming, climate change and the growing frequency of natural disasters threatened entire populations and undermined political stability. His delegation welcomed the proposals by the Secretary-General in document A/66/304, particularly in respect of support for research, the transfer and adaptation of agricultural technology and the establishment of innovative financing. The Rio+20 Conference should promote a green economy, sustainable development and poverty eradication.

58. His country had integrated the issue of sustainable development at the heart of its national development priorities and had associated itself with all initiatives at the global, regional and subregional levels. With other countries of the Congo forest basin, it was engaged in sustainable forestry management, conservation and certification and prevention of illegal tree harvesting. As a result, there were very low levels of deforestation, representing a contribution by Central Africa to the global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He called on the international community to assist those efforts by providing financing under programmes that integrated compensation mechanisms. His Government was fulfilling its commitments in the sustainable management of biological diversity, and called on development partners to provide greater support under the commitments they had made with a view to achieving the objectives agreed upon.

59. **Ms. Agada** (Niger) said that her country was landlocked and severely affected by drought and desertification, exposing its population to persistent food insecurity, while the silting up of the Niger river had aggravated that situation. Her Government therefore accorded particular importance to the achievement of the objectives of Agenda 21 and was making every effort to eliminate archaic agricultural practices and develop modern irrigation methods. In April 2011 her Government had launched a wide-ranging agricultural research programme and intended to allocate nearly $900 million over the next five years with the goal of increasing grain production from 3 million to 5 million tons, reducing malnutrition and developing capacities to prevent and manage food crises. The construction of a dam on the Niger river would also contribute to increased agricultural production. Her Government also planned to improve road networks and promote hydroelectric and solar energy, and it was according priority to the building of railway infrastructure in cooperation with neighbouring countries.

60. Her Government had set the goal of achieving universal school enrolment by 2015. To that end, it would provide free and compulsory education for all up to age 16, promote educational opportunities for girls, and increase the percentage of students studying for advanced degrees from 8 per cent to 25 per cent. In the area of health, her Government would strive to reduce the infant mortality rate from 198 per 1,000 to 114 per 1,000 by 2015. To that end, it would build new health infrastructure, recruit doctors and set up a social security fund for the needy.

61. Niger had struggled against desertification and land degradation for decades, and it had adopted a national environmental policy in the 1980s to establish that goal as a national priority and ensure the effective participation of the population. Following its ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Niger had established a national council on sustainable development. A national environment plan had been adopted in the context of the revised poverty reduction strategy and, under that plan, Niger was engaged in land reclamation efforts involving tree planting and dune fixing which provided employment to thousands of rural young people.

62. All those development strategies would require financing; Niger called on all of its development partners to fulfil their commitments, notably those made under the Istanbul Programme of Action.

63. **Ms. Baidal Sequeira** (Costa Rica) said that her country was particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, most of them caused by the environmental imbalance affecting the world as a whole. Natural disasters had claimed numerous victims and caused damage worth millions of dollars in 2010, and the rainfall in October 2011 had been well above average. The region could not continue to cope with such challenges: the resources which it allocated to disaster relief were needed for socio-economic development and, specifically, the achievement of the MDGs. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean had noted that Central America was the most vulnerable region of the continent and that redoubled efforts were needed to reduce poverty, inequality, and social and environmental vulnerability.

64. Costa Rica remained firmly committed to innovative national policies to tackle the issue, but needed the support of the international community. Her country called on all Member States to fulfil their commitments to combat climate change; the time for excuses had passed. Increased investment was needed in disaster risk reduction at all levels. The world needed a coherent multilateral strategy to prevent and respond to natural disasters. The proposed mitigation measures were well known; the question was whether world leaders, especially in developed countries, would be able to take action and avoid a cataclysm.

65. **Ms. Fafowora** (Nigeria) said that as a result of globalization, the world had become so interconnected that no single country or region was immune from events in the rest of the world. International cooperation was therefore essential and must be strengthened. In order to secure sustainable energy for all, meet the rapid growth in energy demand, particularly in developing countries, and reduce the negative impacts of climate change, a total transformation of the global energy system was needed. New and renewable sources of energy were crucial to the achievement of a green economy, poverty eradication and sustainable development. While some countries were investing in renewable energy technologies, much more cooperation and action was needed to increase the contribution of those technologies to the global energy system.

66. Access to water was an urgent imperative. The imbalance between the development of water infrastructure, population growth and rapid urbanization had dire consequences for sanitation, food security, health, employment and standards of living. Her Government had embarked on a systematic reform of its national water sector with a view to achieving the MDGs, Vision 2020 and the Africa Water Vision for 2015.

67. Her Government called on Member States to demonstrate the requisite political will and cooperation towards the realization of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It likewise called on developed countries to scale up their existing bilateral and multilateral ODA commitments and meet all the targets which had been set at the international level. An enhanced, predictable and sustainable flow of ODA was essential to meeting existing and future development challenges, including those faced by the inherently vulnerable least developed and small island developing countries.

68. **Ms. Stiglic** (Slovenia), speaking on behalf of the Green Group, namely Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Iceland, Singapore, Slovenia and the United Arab Emirates, said that in 2009 the foreign ministers of those countries had decided to act together in support of ambitious action to address climate change and promote sustainable development, renewable energy and sustainable water management. In order to respond to those challenges, it was crucial to take into account their interconnectedness. Sustainable development was an important component of any solution, but all three pillars, economic, environmental and social, needed to be addressed together.

69. Climate change had an impact on economic development, but it also had a direct effect on the natural water cycle and the availability of water resources, which imperilled certain regions of the world. Unless water challenges were addressed independently, and also in close connection with other global challenges, it would be impossible to secure decent living conditions for the world population.

70. Energy availability and accessibility was another pressing challenge, because fossil fuels were limited and, when used excessively, were damaging to the environment. Reliable energy networks needed to be expanded in order to ensure access to energy for all and contribute to development, preservation of the environment, social inclusion and poverty eradication. The Green Group believed that when building such networks, it was essential to include renewable sources of energy, as well as ensuring the efficient use of energy. The issue of the environment concerned all segments of society, from politics and the civil sector to the economy and academia. Combining the knowledge and engagements of all players nationally and internationally could lead to success in confronting global challenges.

71. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that climate change was one of the most serious challenges facing the world, threatening not only development prospects but also the very existence of many societies. His delegation called on the international community, particularly developed countries, given their historical responsibility, to adhere to the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly on the basis of equity in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. His delegation reiterated the importance of having a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol. It called for enhanced and urgent action to provide financial resources and investment to support action on mitigation, adaptation and technology transfer to developing countries.

72. It was unfortunate that the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought had little visibility on the global agenda. Namibia had welcomed the convening of the high-level meeting at the current session of the General Assembly on desertification, land degradation and drought. The meeting had been the first of its kind to address, at the highest political level, the core issues at the heart of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which had long been the most neglected of the three Conventions to emerge from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 1992; the meeting had highlighted the importance of strengthening the Convention by providing the necessary financial and technical resources to enable it to carry out its mandate.

73. His Government, working with civil society groups, had established a national programme to combat desertification, a green scheme project and a national climate policy, making his country one of the few Member States to be implementing an integrated

sustainable land management programme. It was working with communal and commercial farmers to combat land degradation. Namibia also hosted the centre for research and training on desertification issues of the Southern African Development Community. His delegation hoped that the Rio+20 Conference would achieve substantive progress towards the establishment of a new global environmental governance regime and reaffirm the balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

74. **Mr. Jonasson** (Iceland) said despite being among the world's greatest environmental challenges, land degradation and desertification were not receiving the global attention they deserved. The global community would be unable to achieve its goals of food and water security, meet its greenhouse gas targets and eradicate poverty without a major improvement in the conservation and restoration of the world's soil resources.

75. According to statistics from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the world would need to increase food production by 70 per cent over the next 40 years. Whereas, in the past, increasing food needs had been met mainly by clearing and irrigating more land, those options were rapidly narrowing. Soil was a non-renewable resource. In many areas of the world soil fertility had been depleted through years of unsustainable land use; if soil organic carbon were increased in degraded land, global food production would be boosted dramatically. The international community should also use the income stream generated by carbon trading to provide incentives to restore degraded soil and ecosystems.

76. Iceland had participated actively in international cooperation on soil protection and had been among those countries advocating soil restoration for climate change adaptation and mitigation while simultaneously providing opportunities for productive human use. It had also emphasized the role of carbon sequestration through land restoration as an effective strategy that increased farm productivity and income, made agriculture more resilient to climatic variations and transformed the agricultural sector into part of the solution to climate change rather than allowing it to remain part of the problem.

77. Iceland welcomed the launch of the Global Soil Partnership at FAO in September 2011, which promoted integrated and participatory approaches to achieving soil protection and sustainable land management. Its own long-term efforts to halt soil erosion and restore land quality formed the foundation for the United Nations University-Land Restoration Training Programme, which had provided training for a number of participants from countries combating land degradation and desertification, particularly in Africa. The global goals of restoring land quality were unattainable without action at the local level; participatory approaches had been a key element in Iceland's success in combating desertification.

78. His Government stressed the need to increase efforts in capacity-building for sustainable development and gender equality. Women were major actors in the agricultural sectors of many countries; capacity-building of women was therefore vital for the sustainable development of agriculture in those areas.

79. **Mr. Sembayev** (Kazakhstan) said that 2011 marked the twentieth anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Since a moratorium on nuclear testing had been imposed in 1989, it could be said that the test site had been silent for 22 years. The Semipalatinsk region nevertheless continued to suffer from the consequences of nuclear testing. Residents were prone to elevated cancer rates, child mortality was higher than the national average and a high percentage of children were being born with various pathologies associated with radiation exposure. Environmental damage was severe, leading to the sequestration of millions of hectares of agricultural land.

80. His Government had undertaken the necessary measures to rehabilitate the Semipalatinsk region. Social protection had been strengthened, and, in particular, persons who were living or had lived in areas of radiation risk were provided with early and augmented pensions. In 2006 his Government had resumed paying compensation for damage caused.

81. Beginning in 2005, his Government had undertaken the restoration and development of the city of Semey under a comprehensive socio-economic development plan for 2009-2012 and a development programme for 2011-2015; in addition, it had allocated $57 million in 2011 for the development of the city. His Government expressed appreciation to the United Nations, its agencies and programmes, as well as other

international organizations and donor countries which were continuing to provide assistance.

82. At the current session of the General Assembly, Kazakhstan had put forward two initiatives to be taken up at the Rio+20 Conference, namely the Global Energy and Ecological Strategy and the Astana Green Bridge Initiative. The former aimed to secure universal access to energy and other natural resources by mid-century while the latter would promote partnerships with green businesses in order to develop clean technologies and investment, in implementation of the Strategy. The Initiative provided for joint action by States, international, non-governmental and scientific organizations and business to create or develop new sectors; the basic approach was to provide long-term and systematic assistance to countries and organizations in attracting green investment and sharing best practices.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.